

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY JENNIFER SAVILLE

Off in the Far Away: Georgia O'Keeffe's Letters Home from Hawai'i

AMERICAN MODERNIST PAINTER Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) was one of many celebrities to spend time in Hawai'i during the pre-war years when the Islands emerged as a glamorous, exotic, and modern travel destination (fig. 1). Docking in Honolulu Harbor on February 8, 1939, O'Keeffe traveled by Matson Navigation Company's ocean liner *Lurline* not on holiday, however, but on commission from Hawaiian Pineapple Company, Ltd. (shortly thereafter known as Dole Company). In exchange for an all-expense-paid trip, O'Keeffe was to submit two paintings from Hawai'i for use in a Dole national magazine advertising campaign. She was also free to paint for herself. In the end, after almost ten weeks in the Islands, she devoted twenty canvases to Hawai'i subjects. She depicted Maui's 'Īao Valley and natural sea arches near Hāna, painted large ornamental flower blossoms, and created surreal images of coiled fishhooks and leaders floating against the distant horizon.

Articles and society-page notices in Hawai'i's newspapers provide

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The Hawaiian Journal of History, vol. 46 (2012)

a few basic details about her sojourn: when she arrived, her periodic attendance at parties, some hosts and hostesses, a bit about her visits to the neighbor islands (Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island), and when she sailed back to Los Angeles (April 14, 1939). Some Hawai'i residents met O'Keeffe and in interviews and a published memoir have elaborated on the information recorded by the press. A handful of letters to her friends on the U.S. Mainland written by O'Keeffe while she was in Hawai'i and a few carefully saved notes thanking her Hawai'i hosts offer additional clues to the full scope of her travels and activities.¹

The letters O'Keeffe wrote home from Hawai'i to her husband, the American modernist photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz,



Georgia O'Keeffe and sea arch near Leho'ula Beach, Hāna, Maui, c. March 11–17, 1939. Photo by Harold Stein, Boy Scout executive for Maui. Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. With permission of Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.

recently became available for study and fill in many of the blanks regarding her activities.² Chatty, spontaneous, descriptive, engaging, and at times poetic, these letters shed light on where she went, who she met, what she did, what she saw, what she thought. They offer insights into O'Keeffe as an artist at the same time that they detail one woman's delight in discovering the people and places of Hawai'i, an island territory on the cusp of becoming an internationally recognized tropical resort destination and modern Pacific crossroads of East and West.

The letters include much for the reader interested in a visitor's experience of and reflections on the Hawai'i of 1939. O'Keeffe enjoyed the hospitality of many Island *kama'aina* [Hawai'i-born residents], not surprisingly many associated with Hawaiian Pineapple and one of its major investors, Castle & Cooke, and met members of the arts community. The aloha spirit was alive and well with the children of Charles Montague Cooke paying O'Keeffe special attention on O'ahu, the grandchildren of William Harrison Rice along with art collectors and philanthropists Robert Allerton with John Gregg doing the same on Kaua'i, George 'Ī'i Brown as well as Caroline Shipman and her sisters on Hawai'i Island, and Willis Jennings, manager of Maui's Ka'elekū Sugar Co. and his daughter Patricia in Hāna. O'Keeffe so openly expressed her pleasure in the company of the Jennings, especially Willis, and described their exploits throughout East Maui with such relish, O'Keeffe scholars may find fodder for further thoughts on O'Keeffe's unhappinesses with her own marriage and regrets about having no children.

O'Keeffe's social contacts while in the Islands generally remained within the Western community. Nonetheless, she was aware of and clearly intrigued by the full range of Hawai'i's ethnic demographics and wrote about her various interactions with diverse members of the service industry: speaking with a Chinese girl in a shop, joking with her Japanese and Hawaiian drivers, and laughing with her hotel maid as she looked in awe at a painting on which O'Keeffe had been working. O'Keeffe did not describe for Stieglitz the floats, marching bands, equestrians, and other marvelous highlights of a parade she attended in Honolulu, she admiringly listed instead the ethnic background of the people standing around her: Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Filipino, Samoan, and African American. The reader can sense

O'Keeffe's appreciation for Hawai'i's cultural mix as she remarked on the chop-suey heritage of many of Hawai'i's people.

The unfamiliar cultural diversity and "foreign" ways of Island life challenged and interested O'Keeffe, including eating raw fish, wearing sandals with thongs, carrying a paper umbrella. Readers of the correspondence might even detect a shade of pride as O'Keeffe remarked on her attempts to eat sushi and her growing mastery of wearing strange shoes. Her continual exposure to Asian communities during her stay left her wondering if perhaps she should next travel to China and Japan, something she accomplished with trips to Asia in 1959 and 1960. O'Keeffe even recognized that to find the essence of Hawai'i, one should leave Honolulu, which is "really like the mainland," and spend time on the neighbor islands which are "drifting off in space some place I've never been and I seem to like it."

O'Keeffe was adventuresome and seemed ready for any experience on each of the islands she visited, whether it be on her own or with new friends and acquaintances. On O'ahu, she explored Waikīkī and went all the way around the island and up the Pali. She described in some detail the beauty of the pineapple and sugarcane fields and enjoyed her visit to a sugar plantation where she saw the industrial process of sugar production and toured the workers' camps. The serene beauty of the Honolulu Academy of Arts impressed her, as did the Bishop Museum. She found performances by the comic hula dancer Hilo Hattie entertaining and an evening at a Japanese movie house intriguing, yet had some harsh words for the symphony.

On Kaua'i she discovered the designed beauty of Robert Allerton's garden estate in Lāwa'i Valley, while Maui opened her eyes to a new type of landscape and climate. O'Keeffe remained amazed that the latter was so "even" and that if it rained one did not get wet. She seemed to revel in Maui's physical extremes, mountains lushly green with waterfalls and tall steep ridges and valleys; a coastline "crazy" with the fantastic configurations of lava, the "pounding surf" and water "hissing and blowing" through its open interstices; Haleakalā at over 10,000 feet elevation "floating" over the clouds, or from the volcano's summit, "the fields and hills and ocean and near islands all floated out in the clouds like a fairy story."

Hawai'i Island offered nature in more varied forms, one of which she felt compelled to escape. One night spent in the Volcano House

hotel on the rim of the active volcano Kilauea was enough. “I don’t like steam coming out of the earth and holes in the road where the earth has opened up and not closed properly.” On the other hand, O’Keeffe found the broad slopes of the North Kona coast, the ocean beyond, and sense of intangible space extending out to the horizon inspirational. In Kailua-Kona she met Richard Pritzlaff, who became a lifelong friend, and with him discovered exotic flowers that found their way into her paintings.

A little like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, O’Keeffe struggled to assimilate her experiences in a place that seemed like a dream world, whether they related to the natural world or cultural traditions. So much was new to O’Keeffe in Hawai‘i—the landscape, the flora, the climate, the population, local customs, and lifestyle. She clearly recognized she was no longer in the orbit of the familiar at home when she confessed,

“It is hard to tell about the islands—the people have a kind of gentleness that isn’t usual on the mainland. I feel that my tempo must definitely change to put down [or paint] anything of what is here—I don’t know whether I can or not—but it is certainly a different world—and I am glad I came.”

With a painter’s observant eye, O’Keeffe filled her letters with descriptions of color, form, texture, and effect, all important tools in her work as an artist. She created verbal pictures of what in many instances she later painted—‘Āao Valley, unfamiliar and “fantastic” flowers, the endless sense of space surrounding an island remote from any land mass—and hinted at what she might have wanted to paint—Hawai‘i’s tiny rural chapels and “wonderful trees.” Her Hawai‘i sketchbook (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe) illustrates steps taken in that direction with a drawing of a pandanus tree and sketches of a structure that resembles island churches.

Throughout all her letters O’Keeffe marveled at the beauty of the Islands, but also expressed frustration over her inability to grasp what it was she saw and felt. “The country is very paintable but I don’t get hold of a new thing so quickly.” She was so overwhelmed that at one point she wrote, “many things are so beautiful that they don’t seem real. My idea of the world—nature . . . has not been beautiful enough.”

In the end, O'Keeffe succeeded in capturing something of her experience in the Islands and sought new ways to depict nature. As she stood marveling at the infinite beyond from the heights of Haleakalā and Mauna Kea and gazed down through the clouds at the islands below her window in low-flying aircraft, seeds planted germinated in her late-career exploration of space and perception with depictions of sky and clouds. A frequently reproduced painting of two jimson blossoms, a favorite subject from her life in New Mexico, actually depicts two angel's trumpet blossoms and was created in Hawai'i (Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, extended loan, Private Collection). O'Keeffe's two canvases devoted to coiled fishhooks and leaders floating against and framing infinite space extending across the ocean to the horizon (The Brooklyn Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) are immediate predecessors to her famous representations of bleached cow pelvic bones hovering over a New Mexican landscape.

Over the years, partly owing to O'Keeffe's own publicity spin of ridiculing Dole's request that she paint a pineapple for their advertisement campaign after she submitted a depiction of a papaya tree,³ scholars have largely discounted O'Keeffe's trip to Hawai'i, considering it inconsequential and to blame for her nervous breakdown shortly after her return to New York. O'Keeffe's letters home to Stieglitz refute this. They are clear in expressing the powerful feelings of pleasure and wonder O'Keeffe experienced and the profoundly moving recognition of beauty in nature she felt in the Islands.

The following transcriptions of twenty-two letters, one postcard, and one radio postal telegraph to Stieglitz document the entire collection of O'Keeffe's Hawai'i correspondence in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive at Yale University in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and represent the first time they have been published virtually in their entirety. They are slightly edited for length considerations with annotations providing additional details about the people, places, activities, and artwork to which O'Keeffe alluded. Spelling and punctuation are her own, although the correct spelling of a proper name appears in brackets after the first misspelled citation, and paragraph breaks match as closely as possible the original correspondence in which O'Keeffe's stream-of-consciousness style of phrases and dashes obscures epistolary structure.

The correspondence begins with the radio postal telegraph sent on

her arrival in Honolulu and concludes when she quickly jotted down the night before her departure that she was ready to go, bags packed and tagged. What might be considered a postscript confession written on a train to San Francisco after her arrival in Los Angeles—"out there was a dream land"—sums up her thoughts about the Islands as she was on board ship and "nearing what I call real land."

Mackay Radio Postal Telegraph,
Honolulu, [Feb. 8, 1939]

Arrived this morning feeling fine. Lovely summer weather here. Hope you are alright. Love Georgia [punctuation author's]

[Feb. 8, 1939, Honolulu;
personal stationery of Mrs. Atherton Richards,
2819 Cocoanut Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii,
and Moana Hotel letterhead]⁴

How do you do!

Here I am in Honolulu as you see—on the [Atherton] Richards lawn out toward the ocean—the shade is sort of thick and light at the same time—the sun pale—a long dreamy blue sort of a mountain raising up out of the ocean to the right and on the other side of the house a nearer mountain rises up so abruptly it is startling—it has a look like a sort of mossy rock.—palm trees—other trees—flowering things—many birds.⁵ I think I am going to like it—the mountains are very crinkly and severe—it is fine with the warm country foliage. I think I'll like it very much.

A very nice young man from Ayres [Ayer] came out on a tender to meet the big boat with a lot of other people who were meeting friends.⁶ He had two of the long flower necklaces in his hand—white ones—that he put over my head. Every one including the hotels going out to meet any one on the boat greets them by putting a flower chain over their head—they are wonderful things—the flowers strung together like wonderfully wrought metalwork—only all colors.⁷ Mrs. Richards was on the dock—a string of beautiful red coral like flowers and some one else a pink one—then more white ones till I was more dressed up than I've ever been—The young man from Ayres gave me two letters from you—I was very glad to have—Mrs. Richards

Mrs. Atherton Richards - 2819 Coconut Avenue - Honolulu, Hawaii
 How do you do! Here Sam in Honolulu as
 you see in on the Richards lawn out toward
 the ocean — the shade is sort of thick and
 light at the same time — the sun feels —
 a long dreamy blue sort of a mountain rising
 up out of the ocean to the right and on
 the other side of the house a nearer mountain
 rises up so abruptly it is startling — it
 has a look like a sort of mossy rock.
 — palm trees — other trees in flowering
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 exciting and serene — it is fine with the

First page of O'Keeffe's first letter to her husband the American photographer and gallerist, Alfred Stieglitz, on her arrival in Honolulu on Feb. 8, 1939. Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

took me to the hotel then brought me out here to their house—it is small—simple—quiet but for the sea and the birds—She is packing to leave day after tomorrow—I have been wandering about looking at what grows. . . . Tomorrow afternoon Mrs. Richards is giving a tea for Pierre Roi and me—He has been here a week.⁸ This afternoon I am to be taken out to their highest mountain on this island by—I think—a

Mrs. Cook [Cooke]—Cook, Castle, Richards, Love—seem to be the important islanders—⁹

It is so quiet here by the water—just pleasantly warm—you would love it I think

There are Japanese servants—little and quiet—it is much simpler so far than I had dared hope it could be—and I am feeling fine.

A kiss to you—soft and quiet like this air—

I must add before I forget it that I think mail

c/o N. W. Ayre and Son

Dillingham Building

is better than the hotel. They have arranged for me to move to the first hotel they all spoke of on Friday but Ayres will know where I am and I think is the best address at the moment.¹⁰

I am still just as I came from the boat. Haven't changed my dress—I smell the lunch cooking—a very good smell We had breakfast at 6:30 this morning—docked at nine—

So far everything is fine. You will probably be seeing the Richards in N.Y. soon after you get this as they will go by the same boat.

Thursday night. . . .

I am a bit in a daze—I was taken to some relative of the Richards for dinner last [night]—Some 15 or 20 people—such good healthy solid sort of folks—business men of the town that run the boats and airplanes and sugar and what not—and their wives—Mr. Richards brought me back to the hotel early—he laughed because I looked so sleepy—and cautioned me to take things easy the first week or so because of the change in climate—As a result I didn't get up till nearly eleven this morning. I went out and looked around at the things that grow—also a bit about where I will stay—This afternoon was the Richards tea¹¹—It was nice, partially indoors partially outdoors. Some of the doors are so wide that when they are open the whole side of the house seems to be taken away. It is nice—feels so open—Mr. Richards brought me back here—the party was very nice as such things go—but I must say that I think Mr. Richards is quite the most interesting person about. He drove me back in an open car—is very much the artist in the surface of him that meets you—A rare sort of person I think. The people that came to the party were really very nice but I must say again I think Mr. Richards the prize of the community so far. . . .

A good night kiss to you. The ocean breaks six stories below my window. . . . Another good night kiss to you.

I wish you could see the flowers I have—Helen Richards gave me another enormous white chain of flowers—the host at dinner last night gave me a four strand chain of such sweet smelling buds last night—it fills the whole room. A man walked up to me at the party and handed me a pink camellia with a very large handsome bud—it is so pretty it seems impossible that it is real—Mrs. Richards mother brought me the first gardenia she has had blooming this year to wear at the party¹²—Then the large bunch of very large antherium—pink—with big calla lillies—I must get to painting soon—

I'll say good night again—and this time really go to bed—A quiet kiss goes a long way to you.

Friday morning—8:15—and I've been downstairs and had my breakfast and looked at another room—I'll move today into a room where I can begin and work a little or I'll be rushing my head off and I think I'll try doing some flower things right away—It is all a new color to me and I think is going to be very good for working—I hope I can put it into form as well as enthusiasm

My love goes out over a slow hazy looking sea to you—The air here is strange—even when you know it is damp it doesn't seem to feel damp—

The flowers and the queer very much wrinkled strange colored green mountains are the most exciting—most surprising features. The sea so far has not been as brilliant as the Bermuda sea—

A soft warm misty morning quiet to you. It is difficult to remember that N.Y. is cold these days. . . .

[Feb. 11, 1939, Honolulu;
Moana Hotel letterhead]¹³

I believe it is Saturday night—9:30—For you I believe it is 2:30 A.M. I hope you are asleep—I am in bed. I get so excited over being here—I try hard to get myself to slow down. I just have to make myself get into bed or sit down and be still—

Yesterday morning the Richards got off—She sort of willed me to a friend of theirs a huge fellow from New Mexico—an architect

named Harry [Sims] Bent¹⁴—A great big fellow—reminds me more of [Diego] Rivera than any one else I know¹⁵—I was to ask his advice on anything that comes up that I want to know about—

He started his job by taking me on a long drive—up in the hills where there was the misty rain and the many waterfalls—real Wagnerian sort of places—such sharp pointed hills—mountains whatever they may be called—the queer rich lichen sort of green—mists drifting up and across—It all just doesn't seem real—a lot of different kinds of waterfalls—mostly very thin—tumbling way down from way up high—Then the trees—such wonderful trees—a park just recently given to the city—grounds of an old house—a sea captain many years ago bought trees from far away and planted them—such big strong bare trunks and roots—so very tall and so very different from the trees I saw last summer¹⁶—a lily pond—pink and white and blue lilies blooming—more driving—winding roads up hill—up and up—then down again—an area of very dry bare feeling hills—a long way along the sea—then with the sea on one side the highest cliff we saw all morning rising—ragged looking at the top—a queer light grey and green and black mottled surface¹⁷—A long talk about Lewis Mumford¹⁸ and his stay here—Harry Bent has a very alert wide range sort of mind—I like him very much—you would too. From the sea we went up a very winding road in the side of the great rocky space—and were up with the points on the Pali again. We had made a circle. We got out and looked at many things at different points—city park work—things more or less in the making—back at the hotel at one—It was a lovely morning—I had various queer scraps of flowers in my hand when I came in of course—very pretty

I made myself get into bed after lunch—at about five I went out to walk—I met Pierre Roi on the street—walked quite some distance with him—then back along the ocean a long way—the last bit through the city street part—It was seven when I arrived at the hotel—I ate supper—then wandered around looking in the little hotel shops—stopped a long time talking with a Chinese girl in one of the shops—a very lovely person Hadn't looked all around the ground floor of the hotel before. It is built horseshoe shaped around an open court with a vast banyan tree in the center of it.¹⁹ The tree shades the whole court—

Today I have been quiet—getting my working things and tumbled

clothes a bit in order—Was invited for lunch and to go driving but I didn't go—Hung over the back balcony watching the sea and swimmers—and wave riders—the many deeply tanned bodies—the sun has a soft caressing sort of feeling—I must get out on the beach soon—The water here is very soft—my skin so smooth I hardly recognize it—but my hair has gone absolutely crazy—I had about two inches cut off on the boat—think I'll have to have more cut off it is so wild—

I walked a little before supper again—and to bed early—

The ocean is very loud outside—a good night kiss to you. . . .

[Feb. 15, 1939, Honolulu;
Hawaiian Hotels, Limited, letterhead]²⁰

Wednesday evening—

There was mail today—Feb. 15th and I believe I have not written since Sunday morning. A painter who paints portraits found a place for me to live—a very nice room—with kitchen and bath and a huge room on the top of the house where I can work—It is an unfinished room—glass all round with windows that slide—a breeze from all directions so it is cool—one corner is boarded off and yesterday I covered the east windows with cardboard so it is ready to use—and I think I will be alright—really very good.—And the living part is very nice too—seventy dollars a month.²¹

Friday morning—

I was interrupted—went to dinner at the Brewsters²²—they are from Chicago—you probably know of them—have pictures—feel sad about—29—money troubles. They live in somebodys Japanese house—all open—to the garden—just a few people—Harry Bent among them—he is about the best thing I've found here as a person—and a woman—a Mrs. Cook²³ who took me around the island with the Brewsters yesterday. The Brewster dinner was pleasant—the day around the island was wonderful. If Mrs. Cook ever goes in to see you you must be very nice to her—she starts to the states next week—husband on business—children in school—etc. The Cooks are one of the families longest here I think and very well to do I would say. She took us to an old place in the mountains²⁴—some [marsh?]²⁴—I wouldn't remember how many acres but we walked and walked along a stream in the

woods—a ditch for irrigation—beautiful views of the mountains at the breaks in the woods—showed so many growing things I don't remember the names of—coffee—guava—breadfruit—lots of nuts—and the house was wonderful—it is a place owned by many of the family and they take turns going there—it was enormous—with the simplest sort of comfort from many years ago—mosquito netting hanging from circular things over the beds—marble topped victorian furniture that must have been very difficult to get up there years ago over the mountain road. You would have loved it—such wonderful trees too. Then we drove along the sea—for about an hour. It is really fantastic the way these mountains rise up from the ocean—and there are bays so you see them across the bright water often—The Cooks have houses all together on the ocean—not too close together about an hour from town for their country life—very comfortable—efficient—a just right for the sea sort of feeling²⁵—We had lunch at her house—Mrs. Richard Cook²⁶—in a court under an enormous tree—sat out on the ocean side—so brilliant and sparkling—afterward—the others went in the water—I felt too full of the very good lunch—I walked up the beach in my bathing suit.—It was beautiful with the mountains across the surf to the right—Then on around the island—Wonderful surf at one point for a few miles—breaking way high in the air—finally through sugar fields—and then through fields of pineapple²⁷—The pineapple is quite beautiful as it grows. When it is little and you look down into it as I did into the corn when I painted it²⁸—it is very handsome—and later when it is big and has not turned ripe it is a wonderful green and purple sort of color—very beautiful among its foliage that is like the little top we know only larger and longer leaves—it grows quite near the ground—about two feet high as I have seen it. The soil in that section is a very rich handsome brown—so rich looking that I thought it was wet till I touched it.

I have in front of me a white bird of paradise flower that I got at a house last night—It is perfectly fantastic—and very beautiful—think I'll be trying it—Wish you could see it—so many of the flowers just simply seem unbelievable—I also have a very handsome rich red growth that is a flowering ginger—I don't know which is the more fantastic²⁹—

. . . I was at a house for dinner last night where they had Hawaiian dancers and singers doing what they say are the old songs and

dances—one girl was really wonderful—The man of the house—a Dr. Judd³⁰ was taken to see you last year by Leon Fleishman [Fleischman]³¹—

I am going to stop going places where there are many people now and see what I can do with some of the ideas I have collected. Intend to start with a flower—but I want to get out and try something of the mountains soon—They are very fine—

I am very glad that I have come—even if I would have to go in the morning—It is really a beautiful world—The air has a moist sort of feeling but it is a just right sort of feeling. . . .

[Feb. 19, 1939, Honolulu]³²

Sunday night

I've been working all day—was up at six and at it all day till 4:30—then went to the museum to see the Roy show—It is quite a distance—I taxied down and walked back. The museum is really lovely—white—rooms not too large—open courts here and there—open to the sky—a lovely building—The Roy show is very good—he really loves each little thing—a paper butterfly—or a blue headed pin or a sea-shell.³³ It was very pleasant to see after my own struggle with myself all day—The Chinese room very beautiful—much more human feeling than what we do with such things in the East—flowers and grass seem to get in—they help in a museum³⁴—It was a very pleasant hour—then I walked back here—a good long walk—Am feeling very well.

I worked all day yesterday too—It is a mad sort of a flower—a white Paradise flower—I believe I worked on Friday too—Three days on this thing—It is a bit mad—A Sunday night kiss to you. . . .

This climate is too remarkable—just seems even all the time—

I wish you could see the way the clouds lie on the mountains here—it isn't like other clouds I've seen—

A good night to you again. . . .

[Feb. 19, 1939, Honolulu]³⁵

Sunday night

and there is wind in the trees—palm trees—In the morning I go to Kauai—

It is difficult here—sorting—what to do and what not to do—The

people so often seem a waste of time—there are other things I would rather do—Tea this afternoon—a lovely house over the ocean—one nice woman that I met before—her husband speaker of the Legislature or some thing like that—she will take me walking—he offered to take me flying but I didn't go³⁶—the others—Oh dear!

Then I sat over supper a long time tonight in a Chinese eating place—Hawaiian dancing—singing—and again I say Oh dear—! I've seen one Hawaiian girl that was good and one old woman—they are like painters—only one out of many many is good—it is curious how dead they can be moving their stomachs hips and what not—when they are not really good—Just like artists. . . .

So I send you another kiss out toward the rising sun. . . .

[Feb. 22, 1939, Honolulu]³⁷

Good Morning! It is Washingtons birthday—you are always five hours ahead of me if I understand the way time works—Nine in the morning for me means two in the afternoon for you—

I don't know where the days go to—Day before yesterday I was taken out to the pineapple fields—I must say I think they might have taken me my first day or two here—they seem to be pretty dumb as far as I can make out. The fields are very handsome against the mountains—the lovely silvery color of the foliage and the very handsome brown earth between the rows and on the roads—it is a brown I always have to touch my hand to to prove to myself that it is not wet. The pineapple area seems to be above the sugarcane area—feels more open to the far away³⁸—of course the cane is often so tall you can't look over it—it hedges you in The pineapple plants are not more than three feet high if that. The fruit grows in the top of the plant almost seeming to be a continuation of the leaves when it is small—

Yesterday morning the wife of one of the Ayres men went out with me.³⁹ I like her and asked her to go—in the station wagon. We went around a place I had been but wanted to go again—a very handsome mountain—very wrinkled—seen across an area of small newly planted sugarcane fields—just driving slowing along the ocean—It is a mountain I would like to go back to to work—

I had lunch with the Brewsters in their Japanese house on the ocean then we drove some thirty miles I believe through town and out

to a sugar plantation—the only place on the islands, I think, where they work right through from raw cane to fine white sugar—The head man—a Mr. Scott who grew up on a plantation and has spent his life with the Sugar business took us around. It was Mrs. Cook who arranged it for us and he was an exceptionally nice person—He gave us the same kind of attention that she gave us the day we spent in the country with her. If the Cooks run to that way of doing it is not surprising that Castle and Cook seem to control so many things here—He showed us every step of the industry and it is truly astonishing to see the way they utilize and control the material—the juice and the waste. I had a wonderful time—He took us through all the work shops—finally after showing how sugar is made and sent out in a sack he showed us how the people live—houses—recreational facilities—library—hospital—some of the crafts they teach the employees—his own offices—all on the ground floor—all one story buildings—What we saw was so interesting—and the way he showed it to us was so detailed and carefully thought out. I liked him so much I may go back and visit him alone—You see they try to make the life of the community interesting enough so that the young ones will want to stay with them—It was a real experience—⁴⁰

On our return to town we stopped—my idea—and walked for about an hour—around over what had been a very handsome private park. Perfectly vast trees—so different from the big California trees—thick foliage—many trunks and queer roots—a tiny stream winding through it—a very handsome Japanese house and garden all over grown and a tangle—evening sun across the wide stretches of well trimmed grass—a lily pond—all lovely but going to pieces—⁴¹

At night I talked for a long time to a girl in a shop that I just happened to go in—She had lived in China for five years—

This morning I went downtown to a big parade with the Ayres man and his wife. They live just around the corner. There was a big parade for some holiday—Chinese I believe—Any way it was a holliday⁴²—I was most interested in the people looking on—Chinese, Japanese (good friends here), Portugese, Philipinos, Samoans—some Negroes—not many—all very quiet—gentle—orderly—well fed—well washed—and I love the beautiful dark faces—many mixed breeds—many more yellow than white—very handsome—gentle and orderly—I liked it.⁴³ The Japanese woman is really a lovely creature—

and the old ones wonderful—They took me out to a country club on the ocean for lunch—very quiet—even with Hawaiian music—the drive along the ocean—up high above it—water that sharp soft glassy blue—It was nice—⁴⁴

They brought me a cocoanut flower that they pulled out of a three foot pod when they got it here—a tremendous thing—long fronds sort of like heads of wheat—about 20 inches long—pressed quite flat—looking a bit as if they were made of old ivory—with balls about three inches from the main stem—balls about an inch in diameter—The whole thing a sort of glory of old ivory—It stands here on the table—about three feet high—Also my strange white bird of paradise flower—and my big waxy red ginger—and a lot of other things—⁴⁵

Tomorrow I am going to Kauai—The Garden Island. . . .

A kiss to you out toward the rising sun—.

[Feb. 26, 1939, Honolulu]⁴⁶

Sunday night. . . .

I went to the island of Kauai—called the garden island—I flew—and I was afraid but I did it anyway—They have the record of the safest air service in the world.⁴⁷ They say the boat trip is very rough so you always get sea sick. On the way over it was clear for here—that means a bit hazy. . . . We could see it all marked out like a map—these great clouds—great big white ones—dark blue water below—blue sky above—it was particularly good coming back—

The island has a canyon—a small grand canyon with much green in it—a cave that you drive into with the car—another that you swim into if you want to⁴⁸—and mountains that ruffle up into the sky from the beach in a way that I imagine can not be seen many places in the world—the beaches are beautiful and no one on them—They are very beautiful.

Mrs. Brewster wrote to two men that have a place over there, and they met me when the plane went in—One of them a Mr. Allerton is vice president of the Art Institute of Chicago—They have a little bay surrounded by high—very high rocks—an open space with grass, palm trees—the house—a fresh water stream and a magnificent garden all up against the rocks—It is one of those perfect places nature arranges once in a long time⁴⁹—a Mr. and Mrs. Rice—he a lawyer—early set-

tlers here—came for lunch⁵⁰—She took us all to see an old woman—about your age and spry as you please—who took us through her gardens—both wild and planted⁵¹—We were probably more than two hours going through that—It was a real job and very interesting—The house too was quite unbelievable—Things brought from every where and put together without too much taste—sort of a comfort when the rooms feel big and light and airy—Dinner at the Rices—such a view of the mountain and rooms so big the good substantial furniture seemed quite shrunken and small in there—She is a great girl too—Big and good looking and soft—loves her food—and life—quite a wonderful woman again—He was good too—It all felt so healthy—The next day I was the only passenger taking the trip in the car to the other side of the island so the Hawaiian driver and I had quite a time—It was all a very good trip—I am very much tempted to go back up there and stay—It all feels more remote and islandish than here—

A woman spoke to me in the hotel dining room—is the nurse head of welfare work—had been working in Taos . . . says we met out there—I don't remember it—She took me to see a Chinese Artist—that was very strange—so young and ambitious and queer thinking—a bit raw after a Chinese painting I saw in the museum here—it is called the Thousand Geese—and is one of the most beautiful things I ever saw—but the boy had particularly beautiful hands—and he wants to go to N.Y.—He will get there too⁵²—

I must go to bed—I got back yesterday morning and painted all day yesterday and today—It is better than my last painting

A good night kiss to you. . . .

“Wednesday 7:30 A.M.

Mr. Stieglitz—

You said in your letter you had no idea of what I am thinking—one of the things I find myself thinking most often is that there is some thing so perfect about the climate here that it seems a bit ridiculous—even if you walk in the rain as I did yesterday up on the side of the mountain . . . it is neither hot nor cold and I love slushing through the water—Such lovely rainbows too—

Many things are so beautiful that they don't seem real. My idea of the world—nature—things that grow—the fantastic things mountains can do has not been beautiful enough—

I have two paintings but they look pretty dull to me. However the last is better than the first. I even like it a bit but I don't expect anyone else to. Considering what I've seen the paintings aren't much—Such deeply wrinkled mountain sides with such high waterfalls could be seen through breaks in the trees across the valley—It is really a beautiful world. . . .

A kiss to you—I'm going to drive some where—I don't know where—

[c. Mar. 6, 1939, Honolulu]⁵³

Oh dear—the days get by and I do not write—I don't know where the time goes to. I am still looking about—This week I painted two days—went out in the wagon with a canvas a third day but I didn't put anything on it. . . .

Steichen is here three days.⁵⁴ I went out to dinner with them last night to a place where the best island entertainer performs—I told them about her—he was crazy about her and I must say she is funny in the most natural country fashion—really funny and charming—and also funny to say her name is Inters⁵⁵—She is real Hawaiian—a school teacher in the day time and an entertainer at night—One can't explain her because she is a real personality that moves like water from one sort of thing to another as you watch her—

The favorite costume when they want to be funny is a sort of haphazard mother hubbard—a bit short in front with a train in the back—the missionaries dressed them up that way when they came out here and it is a sort of standard costume with a hankerchief tied round the waist—always big flowered material—and a battered worn straw hat—

One of the things I've done was go to a lecture at the Academy of Arts⁵⁶—that was really incredible—and equally incredible were the remarks people made about it—Another night I went to the local Symphony concert—Dr. Judd—taken to see you by Leon Fleishman—and Dr. Judds wife—They have a lovely place up on the mountain—The 21 year old daughters birthday dinner—it was sweet—the dinner—the place—etc⁵⁷—But the symphony was something⁵⁸—However—I enjoy seeing what it is all like. I spent a morning at the Bishop Museum—they say it is one of the best or the best collection of Polynesian Art anywhere in the world. There is a room of paintings of

the last few generations of the island royalty that is really worth going to see.⁵⁹

I've started taking the sun. . . . Was at the Brewsters for dinner tonight 14 or 16 people—the people generally seem very nice here—all sitting out over the sea after dinner on a porch—really outdoor living room that opens also onto a Japanese garden. The people who live well here really do it very nicely

I am sleepy

A good night kiss to you—

[March 8, 1939, Honolulu]⁶⁰

Wednesday night

I've done lots of things today—Went out in the glass bottom boat this morning to look at the coral down in the water—it was strange—but the water on the surface—the islands and mountains from the boat were more beautiful I think—the water spotted with the shallow areas where there are coral beds was a very handsome color from sparkling bright blue and green to large tan colored areas⁶¹—Marin would have loved it⁶²—There is a four masted white schooner anchored out there near an island—then the mountains—quite high—really high enough—with the deep perpendicular wrinkles—they seem strangely unreal—I have said to you before that the color of green is very different than any mountains I have seen. . . .

It was nearly two when we got back—ate my lunch . . . then went to the store where they have the best oriental things—jades—paintings—bronzes—all sorts of things—branch of a San Francisco house—Gumps⁶³—I had met a Mr. Gump and a young man who works there—They had three of my reproductions that the young man got out for me as a special treat. . . . I plan to go to the island of Maui on Friday. Watched the sun set and a couple of surf riders—pretty fine. A man here who writes and paints and has lived over there in Maui has written his friends to meet me.⁶⁴ He had supper with me—telling me all he had planned—Then the other one took me in an open car around Diamond Head—the mountain to the left of the Hotel Beach—around the mountain on the other side are no houses⁶⁵—rocks—then the sea and surf—and finally sandy beaches—and more waves breaking and breaking—The air was soft and warm—mostly

windy—in some places the wind is so strong it seems to blow your eyes shut—I loved the night and the wind—the soft warm air—and the sound of the sea sort of frothing and cracking on the rocks. . . .

Last night I went to a Japanese movie. I have never seen more beautiful news Reel stuff. The play was very good—a very fine man acted in it—the next play just went on and on about something I could not understand that seemed very monotonous. . . .⁶⁶ Everything about it was monotonous—In the morning I went down to the markets and little shops—and flower stores—just poking around—In the late light drove along the wharf where the fishing boats are—They are all queer blue color with sort of orange or red trimmings. . . .⁶⁷

It is late—after two Friday morning—I am going to Maui at eight—Am all packed ready to go. . . .

I must get into bed—am a bit tired but I forgot to pack my palette and had to all repack to get it in—it was a nuisance. . . .

A good night kiss to you—

And a good morning—and I am off—It is sunny and bright—

Postcard, [Mar. 10, 1939, Central Maui, likely Wailuku]⁶⁸

This seems to be the best yet. The trip over by plane was fine—I will be off in the far away some where—but every one says is the good place. The flying was very good and I am fine—g in the morning on a new island seems good—Wish you could see it.

[c. March 12, 1939, Hāna]⁶⁹

Mr. Stieglitz—

You would laugh to see where I am now—almost at the end of the road on Maui—a little sugar plantation town—at the managers house—the only white family for 60 miles and it is different as the man in Honolulu told me it would be—The mans wife is not at home but his daughter is—a very wise little blond girl of about eleven—⁷⁰

Sunday evening—I must tell you first about the trip over here—We flew over part of the side of the island of Oahu—Honolulu is on that island—it is the first I have gone over any of the volcanos—extinct ones this time—rocky cups with green in the bottom of them—grass trees or what not—part of one washed away by the sea—⁷¹

It was a clear morning and I must say that what one sees from the

air is very good—We flew past two other islands—one the leper island the other with many pine apple fields on one end and the most magnificent gorges on the other⁷²—then down we came on the lowest greenest part of one, Maui. . . . As we went over the islands—the color of it all was very handsome and delicate—all like a dream—

A man met me and took me to the hotel where I was to meet Mr. Jennings—the man who lives out here. He wasn't ready to go so the one that met me took me up a near by valley that I must say is almost in the Yosemite class except that it is green—It was really magnificent⁷³—I was ready to stop right there but had planned to go on so when Mr. Jennings was ready I came along—It is sixty miles in the country—up the coast—It is queer country—hard to describe because it varies so—and all the foliage changes—some times grass—some times cane—some times bamboo—in some places great spaces of very steep high cliff like hill sides covered with small ferns and many of the tree ferns standing out sort of singly—there are many waterfalls—masses of rank trees and bushes—all new to me—It was a nice drive—up and down hill—around bends—always the sea with usually its black rim of lava at the edge—⁷⁴

We got here for lunch—a house that rambles about—feels more like the Virginia plantation sort of thing down on the James River used to be feel and still it is entirely different⁷⁵—Mr. Jennings is difficult to describe too—Has some 620 people working on the plantation and in the sugar mill and all the problems and situations that go with such a situation. He is about 45 I'd say—came out here in his teens and stayed—is from Pennsylvania—very quiet and gentle at home—but I notice that when he speaks to the men he means it—there is nothing uncertain about it—Sugar certainly takes on a new significance when you see it this way. The first afternoon I was here he took me with the little girl down a beach looking for shells and to show me the beach—It rained—but it is as they told me before I came out here—the rain doesn't seem to make you wet—We got behind a rock or a pile of wood—and in a few moments the rain was gone⁷⁶—I went to bed very early that night—was very tired. The next morning he gave me an old Ford to go out and look around in. I went over every place he had taken me and on to some more—a beautiful strip of black lava stretching out into the sea—worn under in one spot so it was like a bridge—⁷⁷

It was a good morning poking about with the little girl—In the afternoon he took us for a long walk about 3½ hours through all sorts of jungle—up and down very steep hills—along the sea—past water falls and deep gorges—twice we had to take off our shoes to get across streams—the bottoms all lumps of lava worn fairly smooth by the water—wonderful big trees in some places—little taro patches where there were little native cabins—There are no snakes and no poisonous or very prickly things to bother you so I returned with very few scratches on my bare legs. It is pretty wet and slippery underfoot but I loved it—we all had a very good time—I love the things that grow—the big dark trees—the big leaves—the black [s]team beds with the rushing white water.

When we got back there were two men and a woman from the nearest town—⁷⁸

This morning we all drove on up the road—the steepest roads I have ever gone up and down till we got to a place almost the end of the road—and what a view—ocean behind us and ten thousand foot mountains in front of us and the valleys in them are most startling—The slope to the sea in one direction was so beautiful—the



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast—No. II*, 1939, oil on canvas, 6 x 10 in., Honolulu Museum of Art, gift of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1994 (7893.1) © Honolulu Museum of Art.

long even line of the top of a lava flow miles long—many waterfalls way up on the mountain that must be very big falls⁷⁹—We had lunch out on the grass at the edge of the black lava by the ocean—The lava so very black—the sea pounding in on it—hissing through holes in it—several holes you can look into and see the water come and go way under ground—then we went through a cave and out on a rock and sat there a long time watching the foamy white waves breaking on black black sand and all the fantastic black lava shapes out beyond in the water.⁸⁰ In the little bay was an old Hawaiian boat shelter made as they formerly made their houses with three old hand made canoes in it—fishnets out to dry in front of it⁸¹ It was a very good day. The man and woman left—one man stayed—when we got back to the house I was dead for sleep and slept.

It is hard to tell about the islands—the people have a kind of gentleness that isn't usual on the mainland. I feel that my tempo must definitely change to put down anything of what is here—I don't know whether I can or not—but it is certainly a different world—and I am glad I came. I wish you could see the black sand and the black lava with the sea—and the high mountain country that we saw this morning—I hope to have mail on Tuesday—a kiss to you off the foam that breaks over the black sand and lava—it is Sunday night—

[Mar. 15, 1939, Hāna]⁸²

Wednesday AM. 6:45. . . .

Yesterday I went out painting in the morning—a little thing about 4 x 6—The sun and the general difficulties make me not want to try anything big—The most exciting thing here is the black lava shapes along the water and the cane fields. The lava does all sorts of queer things as it touches the water and its blackness with a little bright green on it is startling against the blue and foaming white of the water—the cane fields are every where it seems—run way up on the mountain—some of them on astonishingly rough land—Every night we drive out to see where they are loading and bringing cane in by artificial light—The big derrick and trucks and men—always some one on horse back moving about in the dim light is spectacular—and driving at night through the cane fields is very beautiful⁸³—often it is along the ocean—Night before last we went through the sugar factory—Yes—

terday afternoon the little girl, Patricia and Mr. Jennings and I went out to the light house⁸⁴—You would have been disgusted with me for wanting to go—a path round a high hill on sliding sinder lava then over big rocks—Then across slippery sea weedy rocks—water coming in almost to our knees—more big rocks—a real scramble up—then along a knife edge sort of bridge—I didn't see how I could do it but I did because they went because I wanted to go—then up more rocks and a high white ladder—The top where the light revolves is small but it is fine way up above the sea looking down on the sort of velvety chocolate rocks that rise up around only not so high—It was quite a scramble but certainly worth it—The day before we drove late in the afternoon down to the most native sort of Hawaiian village I have seen—way down through the jungle by the water⁸⁵—It is real country here—but I like it—Mr. Jennings a very nice person—Loves the country and has such good places to like and to take one to—The child likes it too—There is also a dog—We really have a very good time.

A good morning kiss to you—I must start the day. . . .

“I had a letter from you yesterday—part of it 9 days old—

Seems funny

And I must say I feel far away in another world here—

[Mar. 18, 1939, Hāna]⁸⁶

Saturday morning—Good morning—

It is really so nice here—country—quiet—busy—busy with so many different kinds of things—still the man has time to take Patricia and me some place scrambling over rocks every afternoon—this even climate is some thing I don't seem to be able to understand even tho it goes on day after day—Yesterday afternoon we must have walked a couple of miles along the coast—always we go to a new place—the lava makes a crazy coast—black with the bright blue sea—pounding surf rising very high in the air in many places—queer formations worn in the lava—bridges—gate ways—holes through it where it seems solid where the water comes up in spray—hissing and blowing—And I feel so good I love climbing about over it—I love the wind and the salt air. . . .

We climbed down through jungle too to go to some caves where there is fresh water and you can swim under ground from one cave to another—And we all like it—all⁸⁷—

However—even tho it is so nice here I am leaving on Monday for the island of Hawaii—

I have two paintings here—a big one that is good and little one that is fair. I think the big one really quite good. . . .

I sit up nights talking with Mr. Jennings when I might be writing but he is interesting and it adds to everything—He has been very nice in a special way of his own that makes being here very nice and very interesting.

By the time I leave the islands I am going to know so much more about sugar than I do about pine apples that it is funny—

I gave a woman—a Mrs. Cook—a letter that I asked her to show you. If she goes to see you be very nice to her and show her very good paintings—through her and businesses that they control, I've had my most interesting times—and I think her one of the most remarkable people I've met—She will not buy anything but I like her—she was an experience to me as a person—

A kiss to you—I am feeling fine. . . .

[Mar. 20, 1939, Hāna]⁸⁸

Monday morning—In an hour or so I'll be leaving Hanna [Hāna]—I hate to go—It has been lovely here—quiet—only the excitement of what three people can do in the country—60 miles from town—The sugar town is a town of mixed yellow people—the movies about the only form of city entertainment—It is so funny to step out the door of the movie house and have to take a long step up a lava bank to the street—then to see the pairs of dark people moving off into the night in all directions—just a few cars—

It seems no one has taken so much trouble—no not exactly trouble—I should say that Mr. Jennings has been extremely nice and careful thinking for me—He has made me feel that he enjoyed it too in a very quiet, alert—interested fashion—The child too is so lovely—a flower in full bloom with the sun on it. . . .

Yesterday we went out about ten—took lunch—came back at about 2:30—It was such a sparkling sharp sea—often through these Luhalla trees—a bushy sort of palm—thick enough with foliage to be a house—not very tall—good thick shade under them—⁸⁹

[Yesterday] in the late afternoon went to the good sandy beach

and all went in the water—dog and all—the air and sun and water all just the right temperature—And such lovely trees and bushes—all big leaved right at the edge of the sand—rocks rising up behind the trees—green covered rocks—A beach about three long blocks long but quite perfect⁹⁰

Maybe this even temperature would get you down in time but so far I've loved it—

Tonight we go to a house up on the side of the volcano—4000 feet up for dinner—and tomorrow night I take the boat for Hawaii—

I drove out early this morning—through the cane—along the sea—early light on the mountain tops that are often in cloud—some way feeling that I would never experience any thing like it again.

The cane fields sort of get under my skin—sort of fascinate me—and every day I learn more about them—When you get snatches of the sea through the sharp softly waving leaves it is really lovely—This morning they were burning a field—the fire crackling—and the thin smoke in the wind across the mountain—and always the smell of it—some times so strong that it has waked me in the night

And always you are aware of Willis Jennings with his mind on his job in a determined reasoning—and some times dreaming sort of a fashion.

Every morning we listen to the news on the radio before 7:30 breakfast—It sounds pretty hectic and I can imagine that more out in the world than this you are all in a rather excited state.⁹¹

I have taken passage for the states for April 7th. When I get over to Hawaii and get mail from you and see how I like it there I will be more definite. . . .

I have three paintings from here—one big one of white flowers—It has been funny to see the way it made them all open their eyes—and two of lava with the sea—am sorry that I got no cane—one of the lava sea is 20 x 24—the other about 4 x 6—the flower 30 x 36⁹²—

It is raining—I came in the rain and it seems that I will go in the rain. . . .

I hope this finds you well—it leaves me feeling very well and getting very black—and also getting so sure of my feet on the rocks that I am quite over feeling afraid I'll slip as I did at first—I can even surprise myself with the rough places I can get to bare footed. I have learned to wear the Japanese sandal with a string between the first and second

toe—and worst of all in spite of what Japan may be doing I carry one of their paper umbrellas⁹³—a kiss to you

Dont you think it would be nice to send my portfolio to the Jennings—you see I have been just visiting here and I want to do some thing for them. Would you have Andrew pack it and send it to

Willis Jennings (*Jennings*)

Hana,

Maui

Territory of Hawaii—

They would be very pleased I know—Mrs. Jennings has cut my colored pictures out of *Life* and put them away specially—I hope you can get it off without too much trouble⁹⁴—

Mar. 23, 1939, [Wailuku]⁹⁵

Thursday 5 P.M. March 23. . . .

. . . When you write me that it is snowing and blowing and I can stand out in this rain that doesn't wet you I am glad I'm here—When I first came to Maui I wrote you about the beautiful green valley⁹⁶—Well—it is a wonderful valley—I've been painting up it for three days and it is just too beautiful with its sheer green hills and waterfalls—I should say mountains—not hills—a winding road that really frightens me—big trucks have to stop and back up to get round the curves but even if I'm scared it is worth it—you drive about ten miles an hour—it is just a narrow shelf on the side of the sheer mountain walls—I've borrowed a station wagon from the Sugar Plantation here⁹⁷—I am at Wailuku, Maui—Mr. Jennings and Patricia brought me down Monday—I hated to leave Hanna [Hāna]—it was some thing not like other places—really friendly—and I felt at home—Monday night we were invited to a house half way up the volcano for dinner—it poured rain—the water about two inches deep on the walk to the house—Patritia [Patricia] and I took off our shoes and ran to the door—I felt a bit strange standing barefoot in the rain—shoes in hand being greeted by a woman I had never seen before—she dressed in quite elegant purple red velvet—huge open fireplaces with roaring fires—in all the rooms—a house like nothing else I've seen—sort of elegant and free—but all held well in hand—⁹⁸

It was a very good evening—the mother I have heard much about

was ill—I still hope to see her—Half way up the volcano is 4000 feet above sea level—40 miles up there—⁹⁹

Next morning Patritia and Mr. Jennings and I started for the volcano rim at 10 to four—dark of course—to see the sun rise¹⁰⁰—Well—we didn't see any thing but fog and rain and patches of snow—but on the way down in the day light the fields and hills and ocean and near islands all floated out in the clouds like a fairy story—it was very beautiful—

They left after lunch on Tuesday. I should have told you that the volcano rim we went up to is over 10000 feet above sea level—it floats out there in the sky like a dream when I come out of my green valley. . . .

I am glad I came—I could stay right here on this island for two or three months and like it—a country hotel that is comfortable—clean—food quite alright—nothing fancy¹⁰¹—the people amuse me when I have time to walk down the street—there is a church I'd love to paint and wonderful trees—not many tourists—there are cane fields—a sugar mill—I'd like to try to paint both—There is my green valley—and I haven't even started looking at the volcano¹⁰²—

Just a quiet little town—a bit quaint and queer—Nice couple past middle age run the hotel.¹⁰³

I hope you are alright—I had a letter sent back from Hanna yesterday. . . . I think one of my green valley paintings would do for Ayres—¹⁰⁴

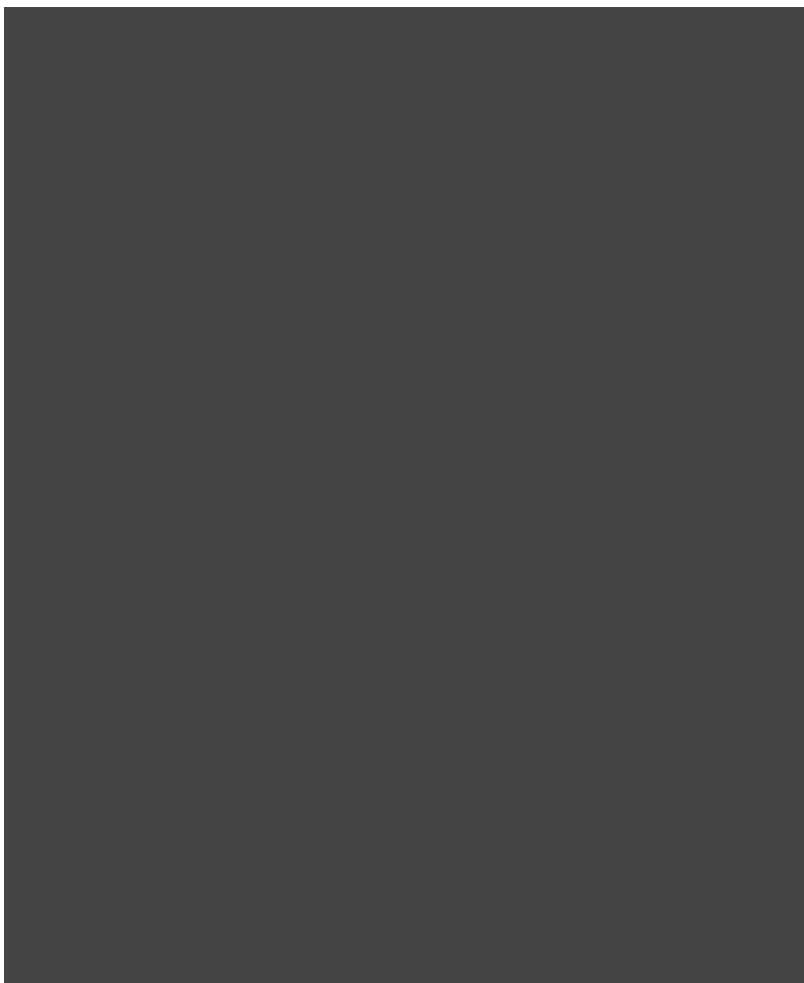
A kiss to you from this island I've hardly seen except in two spots—Am invited to drive around tomorrow—May go—.

[Mar. 25, 1939, Wailuku;
Maui Grand Hotel letterhead]¹⁰⁵

Isn't this paper grand?¹⁰⁶ Saturday night and I am still here. I am certainly leaving on Tuesday the 28th. for Hawaii—

I have been painting away at a great pace—Have four paintings this week. With my station wagon from the sugar mill and my green valley lined with sheerly steep mountains I've had a lovely time.—¹⁰⁷

This little hotel is very good—the Japanese boy carries my things up and down stairs for me—There is a Danish man [Harold Stein] who has charge of recreational work for the island who treats me as if



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Waterfall, No. III, Tao Valley*, 1939, oil on canvas, 24 1/4 x 20 in., Honolulu Museum of Art, gift of Susan Crawford Tracy, 1996 (8562.1) © 2012 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

I am his own special guest—It makes things easy—Yesterday he took me to Lahina [Lahaina]—around on the warm dry side of the island. It was hot—all quite different than here—You will be disgusted when I tell you that I ate raw fish for lunch at a little Japanese place.¹⁰⁸ It is a special fish that they eat raw and it doesn't even taste like fish—also there were mangos and cocoanut milk—It is a different sort of a world over there—bare mountains sloping up gradually from the sea—cane fields up the slopes a little way—and always the sugar mill—and the various types of housing for the workers—

Today I was at the house of the plantation manager here and it is as elegant and modern as the very swanky place Anita had at Palm Beach in a setting as handsome as I've ever seen for a house—The volcano out in front—cane fields and the fantastic mountains of my valley rising up at the back—an irrigation ditch making a neat stream running across the front lawn—some lovely trees and very large lawns all around¹⁰⁹—The volcano is about 40 miles away you know—10000 feet high—it seems to float out in the sky like the clouds.

My paintings are all sharp green valleys with waterfalls. Today was very rainy so the valley is full of mists—It is queer to sit out there in the rain painting and not mind the rain till it really poured so hard I couldn't see much—then I finally packed up and came in—¹¹⁰

I get up at about six—and go to bed early—last night right after supper—Am feeling fine—usually walk a little up the valley—and again before supper around the town—so many oriental people make it different than any town I was ever in—Makes me feel I ought to go on to Japan and China when I get this far—it seems to be the next move I should make¹¹¹—. I guess I am drifting out in space a bit like the volcano.

You see Honolulu is really like the mainland—This island seems to be drifting off in space some place I've never been and I seem to like it. It has an unchanging sort of feeling. . . .

I have no back ground to build this island on like we have our indians in the states. The Hawaiian is so mixed with the other races they all seem old even when they are young and I feel almost too new to be of it at all—I feel quite apart from the place but I like what I see—and I like the feel of it

A good night to you—I get sleepy so early it is funny—a soft little kiss to you. . . .

Sunday night—9:15

Was out painting till 3 then drove up the volcano for the sun set—It is a long twisting drive—up through clouds to the top of the earth—nothing but rocks and clouds and some sort of red and golden earth piled in huge piles down inside the black crater¹¹²—the wind is hard and damp and cold—in my winter coat and green shawl I was cold but it was worth it—sort of terrifying—separated from the earth by the vast mass of clouds—a spot of ocean in a couple of places—an edge of the island here and there—the sun setting—a small moon directly over head—really sort of unbelievable—Hawaii's three highest mountains rising out of the sea of cloud—one snow topped¹¹³—no—not bad at all. . . .

[Mar. 28, 1939, Wailuku]¹¹⁴

In about three hours I am leaving Maui for Hawaii. I am sorry to go—I like it here—It is easy to get about as things that are very good are near by. I have five paintings—from Wailuku¹¹⁵—two from Hana—a very good island—much more like an island than Oahu—

I have such a fantastic flower that some one gave me yesterday—am taking it along—it is sort of dry and flat but lovely red and green and yellow—a variety of ginger—¹¹⁶

The variety of landscape and weather on a little island like this is almost laughable—and all the changes are only a few miles away—

There are more Japanese than all the other nationalities put together—Well—they have chosen a good place. . . .

The people here are nice—they are from every where in the states. . . .

And in the afternoon walked a long way on a beach—such rows and rows of white surf breaking on a reef a little way out and such a wind—really hard wind—

Some of the streets are so narrow a car can barely get through them—

Yes it is a funny island

A kiss to you as I am leaving it I go by boat over night—will be there early in the morning. . . .



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Crab's Claw Ginger, Hawai'i*, 1939, oil on canvas, 19 x 16 in., Collection of Sharon and Thurston Twigg-Smith, Honolulu © 2012 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

[Mar. 31, 1939, Kailua-Kona; Kona Inn letterhead]¹¹⁷

Well

Here I am finally on the big island, Hawaii—Two days on it—no—three days—

I came over on the night boat¹¹⁸—Japanese—Chinese—a few mixed looking folks and fat tourists with carnation lais around their necks—We had to get in a little boat to go out to the big boat 9:30 P.M.—many bundles and packages got on too—and when we got to the big boat had to climb up a sort of slanting ladder up the side. . . .

The boat rocked about . . . I didn't sleep. . . . [I] got off the boat clutching a strange ginger flower some one had given me and holding my paper umbrella over my head as it was raining quite hard. Friends of Willis Jennings met me—a man named Bill Bryan and his wife—He is a forest ranger I think—He took me out to see the big water fall near Hilo—the falls are just what a waterfall should be—with a walk through a hilly tropical park—all in the rain—no one minds the rain here so I go along too—¹¹⁹

Then his wife got two of her friends—women—and took me to a black sand beach—much bigger than the one at Hana but not so pretty¹²⁰—It was a beautiful strange drive about 125 miles—miles of the very rough cinder like lava with only a little grey fungus on it—and a dry looking tree with a bright red feathery flower and foliage from almost black to pale green grey—sometimes a few new red leaves and always many little pale grayish green buds—We drove about hundred and 75 miles—part of it through as tropical woods as I have seen—about a third of it along the sea—then up to the top of the volcano where they left me at the hotel¹²¹—It was a good day—

At the volcano house it was raining—just misting—it had been clear most of the day after we left Hilo—But at the volcano the steam rose out of the earth any where—Put your hand in the crack it came out of and it felt warm—At 4000 feet the temperature was pretty cold—Well I didn't care for that place. I don't like steam coming out of the earth and holes in the road where the earth has opened up and not closed properly—and great bumps about a foot high where the pavement just rose up and didn't go down. I looked into many craters—one three miles across if I remember rightly—the others seemed small in comparison but were big enough to make me not enjoy staying

around there¹²²—It was cold and damp too so yesterday at noon I left and drove over here—another hundred miles—The roads are narrow and winding and hilly and over lots of fairly new lava flows—wicked looking stuff and here I am at a place that everybody says is lovely—a very comfortable hotel right on the ocean at the end of the earth it seems to me and I feel a bit as if I fell out of the sky to get here¹²³—great long breakers roaring in on the rocks about two of my stones throws from my window and you know I can't throw a stone very far—palm trees between me and the sea—all as every body likes it—It was almost supper time when I got here—I went to bed right after supper—got up at 6:30 and have spent the day with my strange flower and have a start on a painting that really pleases me—It is going to be good—I lay out on the sand in the sun as long as I dared—the rest of the day spent out on the porch painting—When it was almost dark I walked down the street—it looks very primitive—but I couldn't see much—some very big trees—a queer church¹²⁴ and the poorest sort of little houses—I'll wait to look around much till I'm through with my flower—It is really a wonderful flower—You will think I made it up—You will not believe it is true. . . .

. . . I just begin to be clear enough about [Hawai'i] to feel that I have something to say about it—and I must get at least one painting out of it that is a kind of color I have in mind. My valley paintings and my black lava are some thing quite different from what I have in mind—Today is my first good start to it. This flower is even rare here—but it is like something I feel here—The country is very paintable but I don't get hold of a new thing so quickly—It doesn't happen in a minute—

. . . I am sending you three bad snaps that Harold Stein took of me at Hanna—That string on my hat is a knotted rag Patricia gave me to tie it on with—it was most unbecoming¹²⁵—The sea roars outside—rain drips—and some one plays a string instrument out there some where not far off in the night

A good night kiss to you—

[Apr. 3, 1939, Kailua-Kona]¹²⁶

Monday morning—7:30

Sitting out here on the beach where the air is so warm—just right feeling—and these very high very long waves come rolling in and break

with such a froth and foam on the black rock after the wall of water has seemed to rise right up and stand still—it is a bit difficult to think of N.Y. still cold and slushy and cindery—This is so very clean—¹²⁷

I painted again all day Saturday—and at night when I was through and put the painting away I wanted to cry I was so disgusted with it—even tho with my head I said to myself it is pretty good and I'll offer it to the Pineapples—I think it will do—at least it seems so to me here—

Yesterday I did nothing—walked—talked—This is a place where people come and go every day—Only a few stay. . . . There are people that I met in Honolulu—and a young man trying to make a movie out on the rocks where the water would splash him if he didn't run from every big wave—has a ranch some 200 miles or so from where I go in New Mexico—knows this island very well—has been coming for years and is going to take me places today¹²⁸—After every one else went to bed we walked way down the road a direction I hadn't gone He getting flowers off the trees and vines—telling me about them—The moon light so bright you could definitely see the different colors with it—

In the morning I had walked up a beach road for a couple of hours—I poked around what is called an old summer home of the Hawaiian Royalty¹²⁹—sat with two men making fishnets—their fathers—very old—remembered when royalty lived in the house. . . .

I wish you could see the morning—and the water rolling in. . . . I am facing the sea and the west so the morning kiss has to go back over the island to you.

Good morning—

[Apr. 4, 1939, Kailua-Kona;
Kona Inn letterhead]¹³⁰

Tuesday morning—5:30 A.M.—I've been up and out looking at the dawn—over the sea and over the mountain up back of the hotel—I went to bed a little after eight and was awake early—Was so tired last night—out all day with the New Mexico young man who comes from Milwaukee, Wisconsin too—¹³¹

I guess we did this area of the island pretty thoroughly—First we watched fishermen bringing in their net of fish in a little bay—and

what beautiful fish—every color and many queer shapes—very very beautiful color—the men swim and dive about—have quite a time gathering their net in—

We went to the most imposing ruin I have seen—great walls of rock and large platforms of rock at different levels—well above the sea—we climbed and poked about on the rocks and looked for shells and colored fish out on the rocks beyond the ruins¹³²—you can walk about in the sun a long time on this rock because it is black and doesn't hurt your eyes—

At a little beach he went swimming—I wading in my peticote—I had no suit along and there are always tiny houses here and there—and a native or two poking about—¹³³

We had taken no lunch along—got a little boy to climb a cocoanut tree and get cocoanuts for us—They are very good green when the pulp just begins to thicken—We went to several native villages—they often live in just a three sided sort of shack—weaving mats and hats—lots of dogs and babies—

Then we went to several houses—one with fine old gardens—all grown thick and lush and blooming every where with all sorts of things—He has been coming here for 8 years—knows every one—Well—we came back with the car full of all sorts of things—tremendous flowers—really too much—shells and fruit—all sorts of queer things¹³⁴—but it was really a good day. . . .

Good morning to you—

Guess I'll work today—

[Apr. 5, 1939, Kailua-Kona]¹³⁵

Wednesday night

It has been raining for two days and seems to get wetter and wetter if such a thing is possible—I have been painting all day for two days—a very lovely white flower that they call “Cup of Silver”¹³⁶—There is a coarser more ordinary variety called “Cup of Gold” that I suppose I should have painted because every body knows it—it even grows in California—but it is much coarser and more yellow—The Cup of Silver is seldom seen—It is lovely—and I rather think my painting is lovely too—The maid loves it—she stands and stands and looks and looks at it—

I am a bit sick of it after two days of steady looking at it. I have changed my reservation to leave Honolulu on the 14th. . . . I am leaving Hilo for Honolulu Monday afternoon—That will give me time to get packed and arranged to get off Friday noon—I just suddenly seemed to think it time to go so I'll be going. . . .

Good night to you through the warm rain—a kiss—I've been bare footed since it rains—.

[Apr. 9, 1939, Hilo]¹³⁷

Easter Sunday night—at a funny hotel in Hilo¹³⁸—the big town on the island of Hawaii

All day I was driving over here from Kona Inn and it was a wonderful day—Warm and lovely and blue this morning—the loveliest part the Parker Ranch¹³⁹—quite like N.M. [New Mexico] but it is high and the lower part of the island—shore line and sea floating off in space like a map far below with no edge where it went off into the sky—sky became water and water became sky—and all so delicate and lovely—It was as beautiful as anything I've ever seen¹⁴⁰—the first thing here that has a kind of beauty that gives one a real lift like N.M. So fantastic to see the sea and map like lower part of the island with the sort of N.M. hills and mountains—

I loved it. My Japanese driver said to [me] "You make me see things I never saw before—I wonder if they will be there tomorrow—usually I only look at the road" I had to laugh. . . .

Yesterday was on the water all day in a sort of Dude fishing boat—a man at the hotel took six of us to a place his brother owns three hours up the coast—more black sand—a house built of lava on the lava—no grass—just black lava—a few palm trees—a good sized pond—a blue mountain above the very sharp ragged edge of the black lava—all modern conveniences but no road to it—every thing has to go in by boat—It would have suited you exactly except for its location—all the blackness—the thin shade of the palm trees—the trees seemed so bright when there was no other green—the pond in the black lava—a wicked ridge rising up behind the pond and the sharp blue of the far away mountain behind it—It was wonderful—We had to get into a little boat to go ashore—and to get away again. The boat ride was

very good too—you see the country and coast line so differently—and George Brown himself—the man who took us beats almost any thing I ever saw as a strange character¹⁴¹—We had a great time—trailed two fish lines all day and didn't catch a thing.

Tomorrow morning I go out to a ranch near here that every one tells me is very lovely—they have invited me to lunch¹⁴²—At 3:15 I take the plane back to Honolulu. It was five weeks ago I left there. It takes two hours—I don't quite like it till I get started—

A good night kiss to you—I'll get into my bed—am tired—two pretty strenuous days—Three paintings from Kona—flowers—one is good and is not for pineapples¹⁴³—a little quiet kiss to you. One very lovely painting to you—.

I should get to N.Y. about the 21st.

[Apr. 13, 1939, Honolulu;
Halekulani [hotel] letterhead]¹⁴⁴

Thursday morning—I am at the breakfast table before seven so a few moments to write

Tomorrow morning I sail—It seems queer to be going—I plan to stop in San Francisco for two days. . . .

12:30 P.M.

I am packed and ready to go—cases tagged and all fixed up. I miss you fussing about the tags

Must get into bed. . . .

[c. Apr. 21, 1939], on The Daylight [train] en route from Los Angeles to San Francisco; The Daylight [train] letterhead¹⁴⁵

. . . I wrote you very little on the boat [to Los Angeles]. . . . You know from what I wrote you that the islands were lovely but I had to laugh to feel how glad I was to be nearing what I call real land as we went into the Los Angeles Harbor and how refreshing as I stood in the front of the boat to feel the sort of fresh cool breeze on my face—It felt fine—made me feel that mainland air is pretty good and not sorry to be here—out there was a sort of dream land—.

NOTES

- ¹ See in particular Jennifer Saville, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Paintings of Hawai'i*, exhibition catalogue (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1990) and Patricia Jennings and Maria Ausherman, *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i* (Kihei, Hawai'i: Koa Books, 2011).
- ² The letters are in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive in the Yale Collection of American Literature at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and copyright © 2012 by Yale University. Per O'Keeffe's request, the correspondence was sealed until 2006, twenty years after her death.
- ³ See "Advertising Art Lures Brush of Miss O'Keeffe," *The New York Tribune* Jan. 31, 1940, 10 and "O'Keeffe's Pineapple," *The Art Digest*, vol. 17 no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1943) 17.
- ⁴ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 10, 1939. Honolulu's city directory of 1939 records Richards' home address as 2819 Cocoonut Ave. The house is no longer standing, but was evidently oceanfront with views of Hawai'i's most iconic landmark off to the left, the volcanic tuff cone of Lē'ahi, more popularly known as Diamond Head, and the Wai'anae Mountains in the distance to the right. *Directory of City and County of Honolulu and the Territory of Hawaii*, vol. 1939-1940, XLVI (Honolulu: Polk-Husted Directory Co., 1939) 499.
- ⁵ Atherton Richards (1894-1974), president and manager of Hawaiian Pineapple, and his wife Helen served as O'Keeffe's first hosts. Charles T. Coiner, an art director for N. W. Ayer & Son, the national public relations firm hired by Hawaiian Pineapple, Co., Ltd., credited Richards with being a client who appreciated art and was open to using fine art in company advertising. Charles T. Coiner, unpublished interview by Howard L. Davis and F. Bradley Lynch, March 16, 1982, Mechanicsville, PA, 13, transcript in author's possession.
- ⁶ O'Keeffe mentions the Ayer representative and his wife in several letters, but never by name. John S. Coonley resigned from his position at Hawaiian Pineapple in October 1938 to become resident manager of the Honolulu office of N. W. Ayer & Son and promote the integration of fine art in Ayer's national marketing campaign for Hawaiian Pineapple. He surely interacted with O'Keeffe during her visit. "John Coonley Named Local Ayer Manager," *HA* [summer?] 1938, clipping among archival holdings of Dole Food Company, Inc.; see notes #11, 39, and 42.
- ⁷ O'Keeffe arrived in Honolulu on Feb. 8, 1939, on Matson Navigation Co.'s cruise ship *Lurline*. A photograph of O'Keeffe wearing the lei presented to her during a typical Boat-Day greeting—the Ayer rep motoring out to her ship along with other greeters while Helen [Mrs. Atherton] Richards awaited her arrival on the dock in Honolulu Harbor—appeared in local newspapers. As an artist who often painted oversized flower blossoms, it is not surprising that O'Keeffe would remark on the Hawaiian tradition of presenting lei in welcome. "Famous Painter of Flowers," *HA* Feb. 12, 1939: Music, Art, Books, Drama Section 8; "Georgia O'Keeffe Is Arrival on Lurline; To Illustrate Ads," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* Feb. 9, 1939: 2.

- ⁸ Pierre Roy, also known as Roi (1880–1950), is today a largely forgotten French painter associated with surrealism and recognized in Europe and the United States for compositions of meticulous representation and incongruous juxtapositions. He exhibited often in the U.S. and, like O’Keeffe, accepted a commission from Hawaiian Pineapple for its advertising campaign.
- ⁹ Castle & Cooke, founded in 1851, was one of the Big Five companies in territorial Hawai’i with extensive agricultural interests, including investments in sugar plantations, Matson Navigation Co., and Hawaiian Pineapple. Cooke and Castle family members often rose to key executive positions within the corporate structure, including Atherton Richards (a Cooke on his maternal side) heading up Hawaiian Pineapple. Love’s Bakery, opened in 1853, grew from a provisioner of ships’ stores into a dominant member of Hawai’i’s corporate community. Founder Robert Love’s daughter, Lily Love, married Clarence Hyde Cooke in 1898. C. H. Cooke was president and then in 1937 chairman of the board of the Bank of Hawaii, another Cooke family business initiative.
- ¹⁰ On her arrival, O’Keeffe seems to have checked into Waikiki’s historic Moana Hotel, opened to guests in 1901 and the first fine hotel catering to visitors as part of Hawai’i’s burgeoning travel industry. O’Keeffe suggested she was going to change hotels but never clearly indicated that she did. The stationery on which she wrote her letters shifted on Feb. 17 from Moana Hotel letterhead to that of Hawaiian Hotels, Ltd., then operators of both the Moana and the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. The Royal Hawaiian, located just down Waikiki Beach from the Moana, welcomed its first guests in 1927, surpassed the Moana in luxury and glamour, and could well have been recommended by her new Hawai’i acquaintances. Both hotels continue to provide first-class accommodations to Island visitors, although now each under different ownership.
- ¹¹ Written up in the society pages of both the *Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, the aloha tea reception honored both visiting artists, O’Keeffe and Roy. Atherton and Helen Richards sponsored the event at their home on Cocoanut Avenue, with the wives of Cooke-family corporate executives—Mesdames Richard A. Cooke, Theodore A. Cooke, Frank E. Midkiff, and Herbert M. Richards—assisting the hostess along with the wives of Castle & Cooke Secretary/Hawaiian Pineapple Director Alexander G. Budge and Ayer resident manager John S. Coonley. “Distinguished Painters are Complimented,” *HA* Feb. 12, 1939: Music, Art, Drama, Books Section [1]; “Visiting Artists Given an Aloha,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* Feb. 11, 1939: Society Section 1.
- ¹² O’Keeffe wore “a hunter’s green wool ensemble accented by crown flower leis and pink camellia blooms which came from the Ives’ garden.” The architect Albert Ely Ives (1891 or 1898–1966) moved to Hawai’i in 1935 and is known for his residential work on the U.S. Mainland and in Hawai’i, including a significant addition and renovation to Winterthur, the residence of Henry Francis du Pont in the Wilmington, DE, area, as well as Washington Place, the historic residence in Honolulu originally constructed in 1847, the cottage-style Hotel Hana Maui in Hāna, Maui, and Plantation Estate on O’ahu in Kailua, the Harold Castle beach residence rented by President Barack Obama during the Christ-

mas holidays of 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. Edna B., "Bagatelles," *HA* Feb. 12, 1939: Music, Art, Drama, Books Section 5.

¹³ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 12, 1939.

¹⁴ The architect/landscape architect Harry Sims Bent (1896–1959), on the staff of New York-headquartered architect Bertram Goodhue, assisted him in Honolulu on the design and construction of the Honolulu Academy of Arts (opened in 1927 and now known as the Honolulu Museum of Art). Bent maintained offices locally and is responsible for numerous residences and an expansion of the Cooke-Spalding house of 1925 (at one time the main building of The Contemporary Museum and now part of the Honolulu Museum of Art). He also served as the architect to the Honolulu Park Board, involved with park, playground, and landscape design. Krauss Hall, formerly the Pineapple Research Institute, on the University of Hawai'i campus at Mānoa, is another well-known building of his.

¹⁵ The Mexican painter Diego Rivera (1886–1957) was a pioneer in the Mexican muralist movement with commissions in Mexico and the U.S., including New York City's Rockefeller Center. He was also the husband of painter Frida Kahlo and popularly recognized for his large body size.

¹⁶ During the autumn of 1938, O'Keeffe spent seventeen days camping in Yosemite Valley with the American photographer and intimate friend of both she and Stieglitz, Ansel Adams. In that high Sierra wilderness, she would have seen trees such as ponderosa pine, black oak, and giant sequoia, different indeed from the native and introduced species found in Hawai'i.

¹⁷ O'Keeffe's description of her drive with Bent is vivid, but somewhat ambiguous. It hints at a circle drive from Waikiki that included East O'ahu and the cliffs of Makapu'u and passage over the Pali with views of the rainforest and waterfalls of Nu'uuanu Valley and a stop at what is today known as Foster Botanical Garden, the oldest botanical garden in Hawai'i. Although expanded in size over the years, the grounds were first leased by Queen Kalama in 1853 to William Hillebrand, a German physician and botanist who, with his wife, built a home and planted many of the magnificent trees that still stand. Shipbuilder Captain Thomas R. Foster and his wife Mary later purchased the property and maintained the grounds, which Mrs. Foster bequeathed to the City and County of Honolulu as a public tropical park. Foster Garden opened to the public in 1931, eight years before O'Keeffe's visit.

¹⁸ Lewis Mumford (1895–1990), a well-known art, architecture, and literary critic who moved in the same New York circles as O'Keeffe and Stieglitz, often reviewed O'Keeffe's exhibitions in publications such as the *New Republic* and *New Yorker* magazines. He visited Honolulu in 1938 at the invitation of Lester McCoy, chairman of the City and County Park Board for the City of Honolulu, and prepared a report that presented his recommendations on future planning. Mrs. Lester McCoy poured tea at the Atherton Richards' aloha reception for O'Keeffe the day following her arrival in Honolulu. Dean Sakamoto, ed., with Marc Treib and Karla Britton, *Hawaiian Modern: The Architecture of Vladi-*

mir Ossipoff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 127–128; “Visiting Artists Given an Aloha.”

- ¹⁹ O’Keeffe described the U-shaped banyan court of the Moana Hotel, the oldest hotel in Waikiki. It was home to live broadcasts of the radio program *Hawaii Calls* from 1935 to 1975 and remains the hotel’s signature public space overlooking the Pacific Ocean.
- ²⁰ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 17, 1939.
- ²¹ Unfortunately, the location of O’Keeffe’s rented rooms remains unidentified.
- ²² Walter S. and Kate Brewster, collectors of modern art and he on the board of the Art Institute of Chicago, wintered in Honolulu in a house on Diamond Head Road and were “closely identified with the local music and art colonies during their stay.” Mrs. Brewster poured tea at the Atherton Richards’ aloha tea for O’Keeffe and Pierre Roy. “Walter Brewsters Are Dinner Hosts,” *HA* Feb. 26, 1939: Sunday Section [1]; “Walter Brewsters Entertain Friends,” *HA* Mar. 12, 1939: Sunday Magazine Section 3; “Visiting Artists Given an Aloha.”
- ²³ Likely Muriel Howatt (Mrs. Theodore A.) Cooke (1891–1969). She and her husband were both on the board of the Honolulu Academy of Arts. He (1891–1973), the youngest son of Anna Rice Cooke, the founder of the Academy, and Charles M. Cooke, an investor, financier, corporate executive, and philanthropist engaged in civic affairs, was vice president of Bank of Hawaii and a director of several sugar plantations, including the Hawaiian Sugar Company.
- ²⁴ Luakaha (no longer standing), the summer residence of Mrs. Cooke’s brother-in-law, Charles M. Cooke, Jr., was situated in Nu’uanu Valley near Morgan’s Corner. Samuel A. Cooke, conversation with the author, Aug. 15, 2011, Honolulu.
- ²⁵ Three brothers and a sister of Theodore A. Cooke—Charles M. Jr., Clarence H., and Richard A. Cooke and Alice T. Cooke (Mrs. Philip E.) Spalding—built beach houses (no longer standing) on the Windward coast north of Lā’ie, the tract of land now Mālaekahana State Recreation Area. Samuel A. Cooke conversation; Linda Strong, telephone conversation with the author, Aug. 25, 2011.
- ²⁶ Dagmar Sorenson Cooke (1884–1962).
- ²⁷ O’Keeffe’s description of the afternoon segment of the outing suggests winter surf on the North Shore, then sugarcane fields of Castle & Cooke’s Waialua Agricultural Co., Ltd., and finally pineapple fields of Hawaiian Pineapple Co., both in central O’ahu.
- ²⁸ O’Keeffe probably referred to a group of three works painted in 1924 in which she depicted the vortex formed by new leaves emerging on a corn stalk, including *Corn, No. 1* (Museum of Modern Art, New York).
- ²⁹ O’Keeffe ultimately painted flowers such as she described in *White Bird of Paradise*, 1939 (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe) and *Belladonna with Pink Torch Ginger Bud*, 1939 (Private collection, 1976).
- ³⁰ Dr. James Robert Judd (1876–1947), a surgeon in private practice associated with the Medical Group and chief of staff at the Queen’s Hospital, Honolulu, for many years.

- ³¹ Leon Fleischman moved in the literary circles of New York and Paris and was an acquaintance of O'Keeffe and Stieglitz.
- ³² Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 21, 1939.
- ³³ Pierre Roy's stay in Hawai'i overlapped with O'Keeffe's and included an exhibition of his paintings at the Honolulu Academy of Arts that opened while both were in Honolulu.
- ³⁴ The Honolulu Academy of Arts, founded by Anna Rice Cooke and opened to the public in 1927, is celebrated for the serene beauty and human scale of its galleries and courtyard gardens as well as its collection of Asian art.
- ³⁵ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 23, 1939.
- ³⁶ Likely Royal (Roy) Arnold Vitousek (1890–1947), an attorney, Speaker of the House in 1939, and an amateur pilot and his wife Juanita Judy Vitousek (1890–1988), a painter especially noted locally for her depictions of flower blossoms, an interest she shared with O'Keeffe.
- ³⁷ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Feb. 23, 1939.
- ³⁸ In her correspondence, O'Keeffe often referred to the “far away” in a personal, metaphorical, even spiritual way to suggest a heightened experience of nature, seemingly an infinite, timeless unknown, a transcendent void. For O'Keeffe, losing herself in the far away, experiencing nature intensively on an emotional level, led to her artwork, tangible expressions of what she sensed as the eternal intangible in nature.
- ³⁹ Perhaps Mrs. John S. Coonley, whom O'Keeffe would have met at the Atherton Richards' aloha tea for her and Pierre Roy. See note #11.
- ⁴⁰ The Honolulu Plantation Co., 'Aiea, located seven miles from downtown in areas now home to west O'ahu urban sprawl, ran the only sugar refinery in Hawai'i and maintained a hospital as well as employee housing. John C. Scott was overseer of the adjacent Oahu Sugar Co. of Waipahu and the Waipi'o Peninsula, which also supported communities for employee housing. Whether or not Scott included the refinery at the Honolulu Plantation Co. and perhaps its hospital while touring O'Keeffe around or restricted himself to the Oahu Sugar Co. is less important than the fact that O'Keeffe was clearly impressed and, according to later publicity about her stay in the Islands, requested housing for herself out by the fields in a plantation community. Permission was denied despite O'Keeffe's instance that she “was herself a working person and could live anywhere she chose.” This incident has since entered O'Keeffe mythology. William Henry Dorrance, *Sugar Islands: The 165-Year Story of Sugar in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2000) 50; *City Directory* 522; Deborah Saito, processor, “Oahu Sugar Company History,” Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association Plantation Archives, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library, http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/p_oahu.html; “O'Keeffe's Pineapple,” *Art Digest* 17, no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1943): 17. I thank Barbara Dunn, administrative director of the Hawaiian Historical Society, for drawing Dorrance's book to my attention and for her assistance throughout all my research.
- ⁴¹ Perhaps Moanalua Gardens, the private pleasure grounds “enhanced by flower-

ing and ornamental plants, shrubs, and fruit trees," which included "artificial lakes and rivulets," a water garden, fruit orchards and other trees, a Japanese tea garden, a Hawaiian-style summer house, as well as forest, agricultural tracts, and pasture, all originally developed by Samuel M. Damon (1845–1924), an advisor to the Hawaiian monarchy, and open to the public. "Moanalua Horticultural Gardens," *HAA for 1914* (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrum compiler and publisher, 1913) 75–80.

⁴² February 22 is George Washington's birthday and marked the day of the holiday observance until 1971 when it shifted to a Monday schedule. This Washington's Day parade was one of the first events of the sugar and pineapple Ho'olaulea association festival. Perhaps it was Mr. and Mrs. John S. Coonley, who lived near Waikiki on Noela Street, who took O'Keeffe to the Washington's Birthday parade along Beretania Street. Chinese New Year in 1939 was on February 19. "9,000 Will Participate In Parade," *HA* Feb. 22, 1939:1; *City Directory* 151.

⁴³ O'Keeffe responded to Hawai'i's demographic diversity, remarking on it in her correspondence on several occasions. In 1939, Hawai'i was what today might be called a minority territory, with no one majority population. *The Hawaiian Annual* for 1940 lists twelve ethnic groups in its presentation of vital statistics by nationalities for 1939. The seven most numerous populations were the Japanese, Other Caucasian, Filipino, Portuguese, Chinese, Asiatic-Hawaiian, and Hawaiian. Although friends herself with people of different backgrounds—Jean Toomer, the American poet and novelist, was bi-racial, and Tony Luhan, the husband of Mabel Dodge Luhan, the Taos, NM-based heiress and doyenne of a literary colony, was Native American—O'Keeffe's life in New York and New Mexico was limited in its cultural diversity. The multi-ethnic population of Hawai'i that grew with the development of the Islands' agriculture industry was a new experience that her letters reflect her trying to assimilate. In remarking on the orderly nature of the crowds, perhaps O'Keeffe was aware that the Ho'olaulea association's charter stated, "The objects and purposes of this corporation shall be . . . to promote and encourage amity and good will between the various races in the territory of Hawaii." The Printshop Company, Ltd. compiler and publisher, *The Hawaiian Annual for 1940* (Honolulu: The Printshop Company, Ltd., 1940) 23; "Hoolaulea Association is Non-Profit Concern," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* Feb. 22, 1939: Building and Industrial Section 4.

⁴⁴ Likely the Waiālae Country Club, opened in 1927 at the end of Kāhala Avenue and, along with the Moana Hotel and Royal Hawaiian Hotel, part of the Territorial Hotel Co. Diamond Head Road, then as now elevated above the ocean along the slopes of Diamond Head, connected Waikiki with Kāhala Avenue.

⁴⁵ No painting by O'Keeffe of a coconut inflorescence, indeed as "tremenduous" a thing as she describes, has surfaced.

⁴⁶ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Mar. 1, 1939.

⁴⁷ Inter-Island Airways, Ltd. (known today as Hawaiian Airlines), began operating inter-island service in 1929 and by 1939 was flying to six major islands in the chain, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui, and Hawai'i.

- ⁴⁸ Waimea Canyon is on the northwest side of Kaua'i. It is still possible to swim into Waikapala'e cave near Hā'ena on the north side of the island, but cars are no longer permitted in the nearby Maniniholo Cave.
- ⁴⁹ Robert Allerton (1873–1964) and his (later) adopted son John Gregg (1899–1986) would have picked O'Keeffe up on Feb. 23, 1939, at Port Allen Airport near Hanapēpē on Kaua'i's south coast and taken her to Allerton's garden estate Lawai Kai (formerly the summer home of Queen Emma and now managed by the National Tropical Botanical Garden). Walter S. Brewster would have been well acquainted with Robert Allerton, both serving on the board of the Art Institute of Chicago. O'Keeffe stayed on Kaua'i for two nights.
- ⁵⁰ Philip LaVergne Rice (1886–1974), an attorney in private practice, and his wife Flora Benton Rice (1891–1971) lived in Lihu'e in the long-gone Hale Nani. His parents, William Hyde Rice, uncle of Theodore A. Cooke, and Mary Waterhouse Rice, built this large family home surrounded by lush vegetation. John Plews, telephone conversation with the author, Aug. 16, 2011; Edna Williamson Stall, *Historic Homes of Hawaii: From Clipper Ship to Clipper Ship* (privately printed by the Roycrofters in East Aurora, NY, 1937) 147.
- ⁵¹ The Rices likely took O'Keeffe to visit Mary Dorothea Rice Isenberg (1862–1949), a first cousin of Philip LaVergne Rice and Theodore A. Cooke. She would have been about 77 years old to Stieglitz's 75. The grounds of her home Molokoa in the German Hill area of Lihu'e were remarkable for their planted gardens and a steep valley left in its natural state. John Plews, telephone conversation; Dora Jane Isenberg Cole and Juliet Rice Wichman, *The Kauai Museum Presents Early Kauai Hospitality: A Family Cookbook of Recipes 1820–1920* (Lihu'e, Kaua'i: Kauai Museum Association, Limited, 1977) 35.
- ⁵² O'Keeffe visited the painter Reuben Tam (1916–1991) in his Kapa'a studio. Tam studied at Columbia University in New York, where he painted and taught art at the Brooklyn Museum Art School until his return to Kaua'i in retirement in 1980. O'Keeffe compared Tam to the scroll painting, *The Hundred Geese*, c. 1250–1300, traditionally attributed to the Chinese painter Ma Fen, a treasure in the collection of the Honolulu Museum of Art. Reuben Tam, telephone conversation with the author, Aug. 15, 1989; David Forbes, *Encounters with Paradise: Views of Hawaii and Its People, 1778–1941* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1992) 265–266.
- ⁵³ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Mar. 7, 1939.
- ⁵⁴ Edward Steichen (1879–1973), a modernist painter, curator, intimate friend of Stieglitz and O'Keeffe, and photographer, worked with Charles T. Coiner of N.W. Ayer & Son on various ad campaigns such as ones for Cannon Mills towels and Steinway grand pianos. Steichen also traveled to Hawai'i in 1934 and again in 1939 on commission with Matson Navigation Company to provide photography for ad campaigns managed by Bowman, Holst, Macfarlane, Richardson, Ltd., of Honolulu. His latter trip occurred during O'Keeffe's visit to the Islands for Dole. Patricia Johnson, *Real Fantasies: Edward Steichen's Advertising Photography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997) xi

- and xv; "Edward Steichen to Make Color Photos For Matson Co. Ads," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* Feb. 21, 1939: Fiction and Features [16].
- ⁵⁵ Clarissa "Clara" Haili Inter (1901–1979), more familiarly known as Hilo Hattie, taught at Waipahu Elementary School and performed in Waikiki as well as on tour on the U.S. Mainland. She danced comic hula wearing a long, loose, *mu'umu'u* dress and large *lau hala* or plaited-fiber hat.
- ⁵⁶ Perhaps the lecture given by Kate (Mrs. Walter S.) Brewster on modern art on Mar. 2, 1939. "Index to Academy Activities 1939–1944," *Honolulu Academy of Arts News Bulletin and Calendar*, vols. I to VI, 1939–1944: 3, Robert Allerton Research Library, Honolulu Museum of Art.
- ⁵⁷ Alice Louise Judd (1918–1966), daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James Robert Judd, turned 21 in 1939. The Judds lived in Honolulu on Makiki Heights Drive in a house that still stands opposite the Honolulu Museum of Art's Cooke-Spalding house.
- ⁵⁸ The Honolulu Symphony (active 1900–2010) performed on the evening of Mar. 1, 1939, at the Princess Theatre on Fort Street in downtown Honolulu. The program included Schumann's Symphony in C Major, a Mozart concerto, and the overture of Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*. Perhaps in penning "the symphony was something," O'Keeffe, an avid listener of classical music since childhood, was in agreement with the critic who wrote, "the lack of balance between brasses, woodwinds and strings made this beautiful symphony appear as a total stranger to this writer." George D. Oakley, "2nd Symphony Pleases Big Audience," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* Mar. 2, 1939: 6.
- ⁵⁹ Founded in 1889 in honor of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the last descendant of Hawai'i's royal Kamehameha family, the Bishop Museum houses extensive cultural, archival, visual, and natural history holdings related to Hawai'i and the Pacific, including a large collection of paintings depicting the people and places of Hawai'i.
- ⁶⁰ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Mar. 10, 1939.
- ⁶¹ Glass-bottom boat rides were available on the Windward side of O'ahu in Kāne'ohe Bay at the so-called Coral Garden and also on the North Shore in Hale'iwa. One travel brochure of the period describes the Kāne'ohe cruise as "a delightful trip in a fairylike water, strange rainbow colored fish, beautiful submarine garden, a truly delightful trip." This and other material distributed to tourists on O'ahu include a description of a popular round-island daytrip in which a lunch break allowed a cruise on a glass-bottom boat off Hale'iwa. O'Keeffe's sighting of a nearby island suggests she visited Coral Garden. For instance, "Where to go—What to See—How to get there—Honolulu," travel brochure distributed by Honolulu's Alexander Young Hotel, HHS.
- ⁶² The American modernist painter John Marin (1870–1953), a friend of Stieglitz and exhibitor in Stieglitz's New York gallery, An American Place, developed a large body of work inspired by the rugged coast of Maine.
- ⁶³ S. & G. Gump and Company, a fine interior design business in San Francisco known for its stock of Asian art and furnishings, opened a shop in Waikiki in

1929. It remained open for business until 1951. Irving Jenkins, *Hawaiian Furniture and Hawaii's Cabinetmakers 1820-1940* (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983) 317-18.
- ⁶⁴ Robert Lee Eskridge (1891-1975), an American modernist painter, author, and illustrator who had several lengthy sojourns in Hawai'i, was acquainted with Willis Jennings, manager of Ka'elekū Sugar Co. in Hāna, Maui, and takes credit for arranging O'Keeffe's stay with him and his daughter Patricia. Robert Lee Eskridge, "Autobiography" (unpublished manuscript, c. 1975) 276-277, collection of Julius S. Rodman, Olympia, Washington.
- ⁶⁵ O'ahu's Kāhala neighborhood, just on the east side of Diamond Head and today a thriving residential community, was little developed at the time of O'Keeffe's visit.
- ⁶⁶ By 1939, Honolulu boasted Japanese theatres catering to the local Japanese-American community, including the Park on A'ala St. and the nearby Toyo Theatre on College Walk. The latter, located on the edge of Chinatown on the west bank of Nu'uānu Stream and designed by local architect Charles Dickey, opened in 1938. With a Japanese-inspired exterior, Chinese-inspired interior, and a seating capacity of one thousand, it hosted Japanese-language films, newsreels, and stage performances. Advertisements in Honolulu's *Hawaii Hochi* newspaper for both the Park and Toyo theatres detail quickly changing slates of Japanese and American programming. Robert Jay, *The Architecture of Charles W. Dickey: Hawaii and California* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992) 172-174.
- ⁶⁷ O'Keeffe probably drove by Kewalo Basin, home to a large fleet of wooden sampans, the workhorses of Honolulu's commercial fishing industry. Japanese immigrants dominated the business and relied on these distinctive vessels with sharp, high bows and long, narrow hulls. The design was based on traditional Japanese boatbuilding precedent, but adapted to local waters. Typically painted blue and orange and with pennants flying, the boats when moored at the waterfront were a colorful scene and popular sunset attraction.
- ⁶⁸ Postcard postmarked Wailuku, Mar. 10, 1939.
- ⁶⁹ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 13, 1939.
- ⁷⁰ Arriving on Mar. 10, 1939, O'Keeffe spent ten days in Hāna, a small sugar-plantation community on the northeast corner of Maui, as the guest of Willis Jennings, manager of Ka'elekū Sugar Co., and his twelve-year-old daughter Patricia. Mrs. Jennings was on the U.S. Mainland at the time of O'Keeffe's visit. For Patricia Jennings' memories of O'Keeffe's visit, see Patricia Jennings and Maria Aushman, "Coming into Bloom: My Maui Adventures with Georgia O'Keeffe" in Patricia Jennings and Maria Aushman, *Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i* (Kihei, Hawai'i: Koa Books, 2011) 31-77.
- ⁷¹ O'Keeffe likely noticed Diamond Head, the partially collapsed Koko Crater, and the submerged crater forming Hanauma Bay.
- ⁷² After flying over O'ahu, O'Keeffe looked down on Moloka'i, passing over Kalau-papa, the site of a community reserved for people who suffer from Hansen's

Disease (leprosy), and then the island of Lānaʻi, articulated by deeply eroded gorges, owned by Hawaiian Pineapple Co., and home to an enormous pineapple plantation. The sense of emotional engagement O'Keeffe expressed in her description here of looking down onto the Islands from the plane's window and marveling at the clouds on her flight to Kauaʻi above hints at her later creation of paintings devoted to depictions of the sky, clouds, and aerial views of rivers.

⁷³ Harold Stein, Danish-born Boy Scout executive of Maui and good friend of the Jenningses, could have met O'Keeffe at Maui Airport and driven her to nearby ʻĪao Valley, a lush, steep-sided valley cut into the West Maui Mountains behind Wailuku. Not only was O'Keeffe already personally familiar with Yosemite, ʻĪao Valley was referred to as "The Yosemite of Hawaii" in travel literature of the period. "Island Tours in Hawaii," travel brochure [Honolulu: Inter-Island Steam Navigation Co. Ltd.?, n.d.] 3, HHS.

⁷⁴ The narrow, winding densely green coastal road to Hāna opened in 1927. The so-called Hāna Highway remains the only paved road out to this isolated community about 50 miles from Wailuku.

⁷⁵ The Kaʻelekū Sugar Co. manager's home in Hāna, known more recently as the Plantation House, is now part of Travaasa Hāna, formerly Hotel Hāna Maui. O'Keeffe spent part of her youth in Williamsburg, VA, and would have been familiar with the plantation culture of the James River just a few miles away. Jennings and Ausherman, "Coming into Bloom" 32.

⁷⁶ O'Keeffe indicates in her letters that Jennings took her and his daughter Patricia out every afternoon to explore the delights of Hāna, but not always with descriptions sufficiently specific to allow identification of every site, as is true in this instance.

⁷⁷ The sea arch that juts out like "a beautiful strip of black lava" near Lehoʻula Beach was one of two natural arches along the Hāna coast that O'Keeffe painted: *Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast, No. I*, 1939, and *Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast—No. II*, 1939 (both Honolulu Museum of Art, fig. 3).

⁷⁸ According to the local island newspaper, Willis and Patricia Jennings hosted a weekend house party with Harold Stein, E. J. Walsh, manager of the Maui Grand Hotel in Wailuku, and Walsh's wife as guests. O'Keeffe would spend a week at the Grand Hotel after her visit to Hāna. Peter Thomas, "Down Hana Way," *Maui News* Mar. 18, 1939: 7.

⁷⁹ Patricia Jennings suggests in her memoirs of O'Keeffe's visit to Hāna that they twice drove towards Kīpahulu, near what is today the end of the paved section of the Hāna Highway. The summit of the volcano Haleakalā is just over 10,000 feet. Jennings and Ausherman, "Coming into Bloom" 52–53.

⁸⁰ O'Keeffe described a visit to today's Waiʻānapanapa State Park, capturing the sounds and sensation of the ocean's surge with water hissing through the porous and uneven lava next to a blow hole and natural bridge that she painted (*Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast, No. I*). She also noted a sea cave which opens onto the fantastic and weird shoreline lava formations in the waters of Paʻiloa Bay off the park's black sand beach.

⁸¹ It seems O'Keeffe had a camera with her in Hawaiʻi and she used it to take

several photographs at Wai‘ānapanapa, including the sea arch, lava formations in Pa‘iloa Bay, and the thatched boat shelter she described. Prints are in the holdings of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum.

⁸² No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 15, 1939.

⁸³ Willis Jennings had recently started night harvesting of the sugarcane. Patricia Jennings, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Letters from Maui. . . . Comments by Patricia Jennings,” in Jennings and Ausherman, *Georgia O’Keeffe’s Hawai‘i* 104.

⁸⁴ Ka‘uiki Head Light on the tiny islet of Pu‘uki‘i at the south end of Hāna Bay.

⁸⁵ Likely Nāhiku. Patricia Jennings describes venturing down to this small village on the water at the bottom of a steep road through lush vegetation. Jennings and Ausherman, “Coming into Bloom” 54.

⁸⁶ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 18–20, 1939.

⁸⁷ O’Keeffe and the two Jennings could well have returned to Wai‘ānapanapa for more time with the sea arch that she depicted in *Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast, No. I* and while there explored the caves with anchialine pools that are set back from the black sand beach. Patricia Jennings also recalls a visit to the caves. Jennings and Ausherman, “Coming into Bloom” 44–46.

⁸⁸ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 20, 1939.

⁸⁹ The hala tree (*pandanus tectorius*), a species of pandanus (or screwpine) and native to the Pacific Islands, grows in coastal areas supported by its prop roots. Native Hawaiians, like other Polynesians, found many uses for it, including weaving or plaiting its leaves (*lau* in Hawaiian) into *lau hala* mats and baskets or using them for thatching a structure. O’Keeffe sketched a hala tree during her visit to Hawai‘i (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe), but did not paint it.

⁹⁰ Likely Hāmoa Beach just past Hāna, a half-moon shaped beach about 1,000 feet long backed by low sea cliffs as O’Keeffe describes. Patricia Jennings also recollects a visit to Hāmoa Beach. Jennings and Ausherman, “Coming into Bloom” 50–51.

⁹¹ In the days preceding this letter, Nazi Germany invaded and gained control of Czechoslovakia.

⁹² In addition to *Black Lava Bridge, Hāna Coast, No. I* and *No. II*, the 30 x 36 in. dimensions O’Keeffe quoted fit the largest of her Hawai‘i subjects, *Bella Donna*, 1939, a depiction of two bella donna (angel’s trumpet) blossoms (Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Extended Loan, Private Collection).

⁹³ In Feb. 1939, Japan occupied Hainan Island in the South China Sea as part of its offensives in seizing control of southern China.

⁹⁴ Patricia Jennings confirms her family’s receipt of a large portfolio of reproductions. Patricia Jennings, “Georgia O’Keeffe’s Letters from Maui,” 104.

⁹⁵ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 23–24, 1939.

⁹⁶ ‘Īao Valley.

⁹⁷ The station wagon probably belonged to the Wailuku Sugar Plantation in Wai-

luku. O'Keeffe later described a visit to what must have been the plantation manager's house. See her letter of [March 25, 1939] and note #109.

- ⁹⁸ Dora Melville Dowsett (Mrs. Randall) Von Tempsky and her widowed daughter Alexandra (Alexa) Gustav Von Tempsky (Mrs. John Gray) Zabriskie lived in Kula, on the slopes of the volcano Haleakalā. Good friends of the Jenningses, the Von Tempsky's hosted a dinner at their Tudor-Revival ranch house, Erewhon ("Nowhere" spelled backwards), attended by O'Keeffe with Willis and Patricia Jennings and recollected somewhat differently by the latter. Jennings and Ausherman, "Coming into Bloom" 68–71.
- ⁹⁹ The elder Mrs. Von Tempsky had been ill, was in the hospital that spring and likely not present at the dinner attended by O'Keeffe and the two Jennings. She died in Oct. 1939. Strictly speaking, Erewhon is probably located closer to twenty miles from Wailuku, not the forty O'Keeffe states. "Mrs. von Tempsky Leaves Malulani," *Maui News* Apr. 1, 1939: 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ Defying the risks of rain, snow, fog, cloud cover, and ice, viewing the sunrise from the summit of Haleakalā (elev. 10,023), the highest point on Maui, is still considered one of the highlights of any trip to the island. The Haleakalā Highway opened in 1935, four years before O'Keeffe's visit.
- ¹⁰¹ O'Keeffe remained just more than a week in Wailuku at the Maui Grand Hotel. Opened in 1916 and the largest hotel on Maui until after World War II, it closed its doors in the early 1960s. Don J. Hibbard, *Designing Paradise: The Allure of the Hawaiian Resort* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006) 47.
- ¹⁰² In addition to depicting 'Īao Valley and the Hāna coastline, O'Keeffe executed three precursory sketches of a tiny unidentified church similar to those found in rural Hawai'i, but went no further with the subject. O'Keeffe could have had her pick of sugar mills to render in Central Maui. Despite taking two photographs of sugarcane fields, she did not develop the subject into a painting. Drawings and photos are in the collection of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe.
- ¹⁰³ Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Walsh, the proprietors of the Maui Grand Hotel, attended the house party in Hāna hosted by Willis Jennings and Patricia and alluded to by O'Keeffe in her letter of Mar. 12, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁴ O'Keeffe submitted *Papaya Tree—'Īao Valley*, 1939 (Honolulu Museum of Art) to Dole, but it was rejected, likely because it suggested a fruit product other than pineapple.
- ¹⁰⁵ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 25–27, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁶ During her stay in the Islands, O'Keeffe typically wrote her letters on the stationery presumably provided by the hotel in which she was resident, in this case the Maui Grand Hotel.
- ¹⁰⁷ O'Keeffe completed four canvases depicting waterfalls in 'Īao Valley: *Waterfall, No. I, 'Īao Valley, Maui*, 1939 (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN); *Waterfall, No. II, 'Īao Valley*, 1939 (Private Collection, Washington, D.C.); *Waterfall, No. III, 'Īao Valley*, 1939 (Honolulu Museum of Art); and *Waterfall, End of Road, 'Īao Valley*, 1939 (Honolulu Museum of Art).

- ¹⁰⁸ O'Keeffe seems to have been proud of her experimentations with, to her, foreign ways, but local custom in the Islands, including eating raw fish. She mentions the same experience in an undated letter of the same period to her friend Ettie Stettheimer, sister of the American painter Florine Stettheimer. O'Keeffe, letter to Ettie Stettheimer, [Mar. 1939], Wailuku, Maui, Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- ¹⁰⁹ Anita O'Keeffe Young (1891–1985), Georgia O'Keeffe's younger sister and wife of New York railroad financier Robert R. Young, was a doyenne of Palm Beach, FL, society known for entertaining guests in her luxurious beachfront house. O'Keeffe's description of the Wailuku house matches the Charles W. Dickey-designed Wailuku Sugar Plantation's manager's residence on Main St., more recently the home of Hawai'i businessman and philanthropist Masaru "Pundy" Yakouchi. I thank David Forbes for suggesting this house as the "swanky" residence O'Keeffe visited.
- ¹¹⁰ O'Keeffe altered her own car on the U.S. Mainland so that she could paint while seated inside it. Patricia Jennings recollects O'Keeffe painting the same way in 'Īao Valley. Jennings and Ausherman, "Coming into Bloom" 64–65.
- ¹¹¹ After Stieglitz's death in 1946, O'Keeffe developed something of a travel bug and subsequently visited Asia in 1959 and again in 1960.
- ¹¹² Unfamiliar with volcanic landscape features, O'Keeffe did not recognize these piles of earth as cinder cones.
- ¹¹³ O'Keeffe no doubt referred to the summit of Haleakalā on which she stood above the clouds as well as Mauna Kea (elev. 13,796 ft.) and Mauna Loa (elev. 13,679 ft.), both on Hawai'i Island, with the former likely snow capped. One senses in O'Keeffe's description the awed wonder, even disembodiment she felt when gazing out over the mountain tops, disconnected by the clouds from the earthly realm below, caught betwixt and between the heavens and the sea and the sun and the moon, day turning into night. Again, O'Keeffe's experience of this elemental side of the universe hints at her interest late in life in depicting the infinite aspect of sky and clouds.
- ¹¹⁴ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 29, 1939.
- ¹¹⁵ O'Keeffe dedicated four canvases to the waterfalls in 'Īao Valley and one to a papaya tree, all already mentioned.
- ¹¹⁶ With several of her Hawai'i subjects, O'Keeffe misidentified or misspelled in her titles the names of the plant or tree depicted. She devoted two canvases to brightly colored flat-bracted gingers or, perhaps more correctly, ginger's close relative, heliconia plants: *Crab's Claw Ginger, Hawai'i*, 1939 (Collection of Sharon and Thurston Twigg-Smith, Honolulu) and *Heliconia*, 1939 (Private collection).
- ¹¹⁷ No envelope survives to document postmarking. Beinecke ref. date for letter: Mar. 31, 1939.
- ¹¹⁸ Incorporated in 1883, the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., transported cargo and passengers between the Hawaiian Islands on its small fleet

- of steamers. O'Keeffe sailed the night of Mar. 28, 1939, likely departing from Lahaina on the *Waialeale's* regular overnight run, arriving in Hilo the next morning. Earl M. Welty, *Inter-Island and the Hawaiian Islands* ([Honolulu]: Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., c. 1945) [2], HHS.
- ¹¹⁹ Leicester W. (Bill) Bryan, Territorial Forester, and his wife Irma met O'Keeffe on Mar. 29, 1939. Bryan may have taken O'Keeffe to Rainbow Falls on the outskirts of Hilo or 'Akaka Falls, located "in a hilly tropical park" about ten miles north of town. Ah See Awl, "Noted Woman Artist Arrives for Visit," *Hilo Tribune Herald* Mar. 29, 1939: 1.
- ¹²⁰ O'Keeffe's drive to Kilauea Crater in Hawaii National Park (now Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park) included a stop at the black sand beach at Kalapana, along the island's southeast coast. Lava flows from Kilauea Volcano later engulfed the beach in 1990. "Noted Woman Artist Arrives for Visit."
- ¹²¹ The drive was likely closer to 75 miles and would have encompassed the arid and barren lava flows of the coastal plains and the lush growth of misty rain forest at higher elevations. O'Keeffe stayed at Volcano House. Tree ferns and 'ōhi'a trees, the latter characterized by feathery red blossoms, thrive on the rim of Kilauea Crater. Although Western tourists visited Kilauea Volcano as early as 1823 and found a variety of increasingly hospitable accommodations over the years, the Volcano House became a commercial enterprise in 1866 and has remained in business since then. Although in late 2011 it is closed for renovations, the Volcano House remains at the heart of most tourist activity at the still active volcano. Hibbard, *Designing Paradise* 17.
- ¹²² O'Keeffe surely drove the Crater Rim Road and ventured down the then recently opened Chain of Craters Road past the steaming vents and multiple craters that take shape as part of the volcano's natural life. Today, both roads still succumb periodically to the forces of Kilauea's lava flows and heaving grounds. At its widest, Kilauea Crater measures upwards of three miles.
- ¹²³ O'Keeffe's route took her clockwise around the island past the lava fields of the Ka'ū Desert and South Kona to Kailua-Kona. She checked into the beachfront Kona Inn, which the Inter-Island Steamship Navigation Company opened in 1928 as part of its effort to develop Hawai'i's visitor industry (and which stopped taking overnight guests in the mid 1970s). Hibbard, *Designing Paradise* 49.
- ¹²⁴ Perhaps Moku'aikaua Church. Founded by missionaries in 1820 and located near the Kona Inn, it is the oldest church in Hawai'i. O'Keeffe would have seen the structure that dates to 1837 and is one of the Islands' first permanent stone buildings.
- ¹²⁵ Prints of Stein's portrait photographs of O'Keeffe taken in Hāna at the sea arch near Leho'ula Beach reside in the research collections of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe together with other shots of Hawai'i attributed to O'Keeffe. The snapshots O'Keeffe actually enclosed in her letter to Stieglitz are with her letters in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- ¹²⁶ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Apr. 3, 1939.

- ¹²⁷ In her correspondence, O'Keeffe used the word "clean" in a personal almost mystical sense, as if to express her recognition of nature appearing before her in a higher, more pure form, more true unto itself.
- ¹²⁸ Richard Pritzlaff, a breeder of Arabian horses, chow dogs, and peacocks, also lived near Abiquiú, New Mexico, the small community that had drawn O'Keeffe to the American Southwest most summers since 1929 and to which she relocated on Stieglitz's death in 1946. As a rancher himself, Pritzlaff made several trips to Hawai'i Island and knew the owners of numerous cattle spreads. O'Keeffe and Pritzlaff remained friends and neighbors after her return to the Mainland. Richard Pritzlaff, telephone conversation with the author, Oct. 17, 1989.
- ¹²⁹ Hulihe'e Palace, built in Kailua-Kona in 1838, is a beachfront residence that was enjoyed by various members of Hawai'i's ruling families. The Daughters of Hawai'i restored it as a museum in 1927 and continues to display for the public a collection of artifacts dating from the era of King Kalākaua (1836–1891) and Queen Kapi'olani (1834–1899).
- ¹³⁰ Envelope postmarked Kailua[-Kona], Apr. 4, 1939.
- ¹³¹ O'Keeffe was born in 1887 in Sun Prairie, WI, about thirteen miles southwest of Madison or seventy four miles west of Milwaukee, and moved to Williamsburg, VA, when she was sixteen.
- ¹³² Pritzlaff must have taken O'Keeffe up the Kona Coast to Pu'ukoholā Heiau, now a National Historic Site. Built by Kamehameha I in 1790 for his war god, Kūkā'ilimoku, it is one of the last major temple platforms constructed in the Islands. The massive stone terraces and buttressed walls of the *heiau* sit high on a broad slope of Pu'ukoholā hills, overlooking the rocky shoreline below, the waters inhabited by colorful reef fish.
- ¹³³ Accustomed to skinny-dipping, especially when summering at the Stieglitz family house on Lake George, NY, O'Keeffe evidently maintained proprieties in the Islands when she was in range of public observation.
- ¹³⁴ O'Keeffe seemingly brought with her to Hawai'i her well-known beachcombing habits, that of collecting stones, shells, coral, leaves, flowers, bones, bits of wood, any small part of nature that seemed to represent to her a larger natural whole. She alludes to this in the statement she prepared to accompany the exhibition of her Hawai'i paintings at Stieglitz's New York gallery, An American Place, "Some of [the canvases] were painted in Hawaii, some were painted here in New York from drawings or memories or things brought home." Georgia O'Keeffe, "Exhibition of Oils and Pastels," exh. brochure (New York: An American Place, 1940) n.p.
- ¹³⁵ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Apr. 9, 1939.
- ¹³⁶ *Cup of Silver*, 1939 (The Baltimore Museum of Art)
- ¹³⁷ Envelope postmarked Hilo, Apr. 10, 1939.
- ¹³⁸ O'Keeffe could have been a guest at the historic Hilo Hotel, managed by George Lycurgus (1860–1960), proprietor also of the Volcano House. Hibbard, *Designing Paradise* 47 and 49.

- ¹³⁹ Founded in 1847 by John Palmer Parker (1790–1868), an American who served Hawai'i's King Kamehameha I and married into the royal family, the Parker Ranch grew into one of the largest cattle ranches in the United States. It continues to operate on the northwestern slopes of Mauna Kea volcano.
- ¹⁴⁰ O'Keeffe's description of the mystical effect of spatial infinity is akin to her remarks about the "faraway," a highly personal response to nature (see note #38). The blurring of reality out at the farthest reaches of visual perception as experienced by O'Keeffe looking down from the slopes of Mauna Kea is a motif she adopted in some of the Hawai'i floral subjects in which she juxtaposed a blossom against the horizon where the sea and sky merge. In *Fishhook from Hawai'i—No. 1*, 1939 (The Brooklyn Museum) and *Fishhook from Hawai'i, No. 2*, 1939 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), she devoted two canvases of coiled fishhooks and leaders floating against the same effect, framing the infinite beyond. These paintings represent the first time O'Keeffe used this type of compositional framing device that is celebrated in her later depictions of bleached cow pelvic bones and spiraling ram horns hovering in front of a New Mexico landscape. At the end of her career, she returned to the theme of the infinite beyond with paintings of sky, clouds, and the horizon, such as in *Sky Above the Flat White Cloud II*, 1960/64 (Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe).
- ¹⁴¹ George 'Ī'i Brown (1887–1946), grandson of Judge John Papa 'Ī'i, an influential member of the royal court and associate justice of the Supreme Court of the Kingdom of Hawai'i during the mid nineteenth century, was the manager and treasurer of the John 'Ī'i Estate, Ltd. Brown took O'Keeffe to his brother Francis Hyde 'Ī'i Brown's isolated beach retreat on the barren, lava-bound coastline of Keawaiki Bay on the North Kona coast. The complex remained accessible by water only until the modern-day construction of a rough overland track. Today it is listed on the Hawai'i and National Register of Historic Places.
- ¹⁴² Caroline Shipman and other daughters of William H. Shipman, a prominent Hilo rancher and businessman, had O'Keeffe for lunch in Hilo on Apr. 10, 1939, and showed her around before her flight to Honolulu. O'Keeffe, letter to Caroline Shipman, [c. April 11–13, 1939], Honolulu, Halekulani (hotel) letterhead, Private collection.
- ¹⁴³ Perhaps *Cup of Silver*; *Crab's Claw Ginger*; *Hawai'i*; and/or *Heliconia*.
- ¹⁴⁴ Envelope postmarked Honolulu, Apr. 14, 1939.
- ¹⁴⁵ Envelope postmarked San Francisco, Apr. 21, 1939.

